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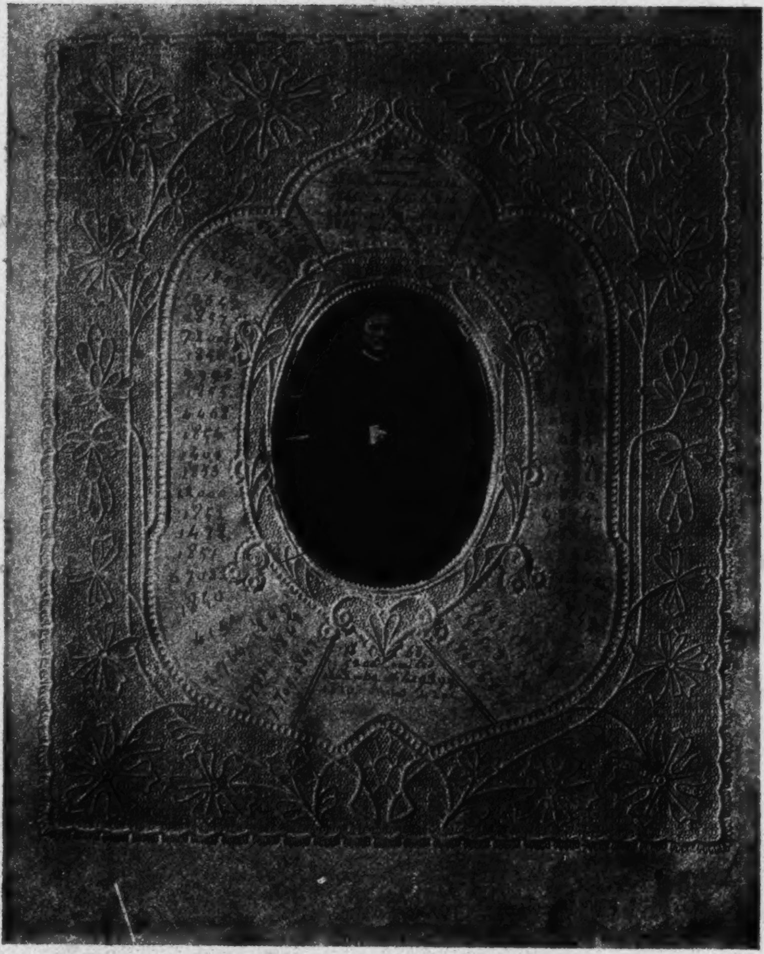
Life, Letters and Travels of Father De Smet among the North American Indians.



FATHER DE SMET'S AUTOGRAPH MILEAGE RECORD FROM THE LINTON ALBUM.

LIFE, LETTERS AND TRAVELS
OF
FATHER PIERRE-JEAN DE SMET, S. J.
1801-1873

Missionary Labors and Adventures among the Wild Tribes of the North American Indians, Embracing Minute Description of Their Manners, Customs, Games, Modes of Warfare and Torture, Legends, Tradition, etc., All from Personal Observations Made during Many Thousand Miles of Travel, with Sketches of the Country from St. Louis to Puget Sound and the Altrabasca

Edited from the original unpublished manuscript Journals and Letter Books and from his Printed Works with Historical, Geographical, Ethnological and other Notes; Also a Life of Father De Smet

MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

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Major, Corps of Engineers, U. S. A.
AND
ALFRED TALBOT RICHARDSON

FOUR VOLUMES
VOL. I

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TO THE MEMORY

Of the Men

OF

WHATSOEVER CREED OR NATION WHO SPENT THEMSELVES

IN THE

Forming of the West

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PREFACE.

The present work is an outgrowth of the interest which the editors have long taken in the pioneer history of the West. Explorers of this attractive field are constantly running across the trail of Father De Smet, which interlaces the whole Northwest from St. Louis to the Straits of Juan de Fuca. Wherever encountered, it is a tempting trail to follow, for it is marked in all its course by episodes romantic and interesting and frequently of weighty importance. A devout and zealous missionary, Father De Smet filled the Oregon country with religious establishments, some of which, in spite of the vast changes of later years, survive to the present day. He was acquainted with most of the native tribes of the Northwest and with many of them he was on terms of intimate friendship. Their trust in him was so complete and his influence over them so great that the government repeatedly besought his aid in paving the way for its negotiations with them. He assisted at the great Indian council of 1851 near Fort Laramie. In 1858 and 1859 he accompanied the Utah and Oregon expeditions under General Harney in the nominal capacity of Chaplain, but in the actual rôle of pacificator and intermediary between the military and the Indians. In 1864 he was sent by the government to pacify the Indians of the Upper Missouri, and again on a similar errand in 1867. In 1868, it was alone through his great influence that the hostile Sioux, who had declared war to the death with the white race and were spreading terror over the whole region of the Upper Missouri and Yellowstone valleys, were induced to meet commissioners of the government and enter into a treaty of peace.

Father De Smet's travels were not confined to the western country. He visited many parts of the United States east of the Mississippi, crossed the Atlantic nineteen times and made one voyage around Cape Horn and two by way of Panama in the interest of his work. He was well known in both Europe and America, and on one occasion was made the bearer of dispatches from this government to several European courts. He took an active interest in public affairs and watched them with an eagerness which one would hardly expect from his exclusive order of life.

Wherever he went, whatever he did and much of what he saw were carefully recorded in letters to his superiors or to his personal friends. Many of these letters were published in his lifetime; many others were never published and are accessible only in the original letter-books. Altogether they constitute a rich fund of material upon the early history of the West, particularly during the critical period of our Indian wars. Unfortunately these writings are practically inaccessible to the general public. The unpublished letters are, of course, wholly so. The published works are nearly all out of print and some of them were published only in French. There has never been written a satisfactory biography of Father De Smet.

To supply these deficiencies and make the life-work of this great missionary and public man familiar to students of our country's history, the editors have prepared the present work—LIFE AND LETTERS OF FATHER DE SMET—comprising a complete biography, all his important letters both published and unpublished, illustrations characteristic of his missionary career, and a map showing the wide range of his travels west of the Mississippi.

The original arrangement in the published works has been discarded entirely and the letters have been reclassified according to periods and subjects. Even the English texts have not been literally followed, for they are nearly all translations, and the editors have felt at liberty to substitute their own rendering wherever they have thought it desirable. The English of the published texts is almost throughout a translation from Father De Smet's French letters, and none of it apparently is his own work. It is full of renderings of French phrases, and more particularly of geographical names, which show a lack of familiarity on the part of the translator with the subjects treated. No record has been kept of the pagination of the published letters for the reason that much of the matter was duplicated in different texts and in the present edition is extensively interspersed with new letters treating of the same subjects.

The narrative letters are classified under five chronological periods, each of which is prefaced with an itinerary of Father De Smet's travels during that period. Following the narrative portion are the letters containing observations upon Indian affairs, missionary work, public questions, etc.; personal letters to his friends in Europe and America which show the inner life and character of the man; and finally many of the letters received in the course of a long and active correspondence. The new matter in the present edition is about equal in volume to all heretofore published, and contains everything which, in the opinion of the editors, would be of general interest. It omits several of the published letters relating solely to church matters.

The editors are under particular obligation to the Jesuit authorities of the St. Louis University for access to the old letter-books of Father De Smet, and for other valuable assistance. Thanks are also due the Reverend J. D'Aste, S. J., of St. Ignatius Mission, Montana; W. R. Logan, U. S. Indian Agent at Fort Belknap Agency, and James H. Monteath, U. S. Indian Agent at Blackfeet Agency, Montana, for information furnished. Among the published works consulted, Shea's *Catholic Missions in the United States, History of the St. Louis University,* by Father Walter H. Hill, S. J., and Palladino's *Indian and White in the Northwest,* are the most important.

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LIFE OF FATHER DE SMET.

CHAPTER I.

THE JESUITS IN AMERICA.

Birth of Society of Jesus — Wonderful growth and power — Downfall and restoration — Missionary work of Society in America — Early Canadian missions — Insuperable obstacles — Novitiate at Whitemarsh — Migration to St. Louis — Founding of the Florissant Novitiate — The St. Louis University — Indian missions entrusted to Jesuits — Field of labor in Far West.

FORTY-TWO years after the discovery of America there arose in Europe a religious order destined to play a leading part in the Christianization of those races which the great achievement of Columbus made known to the world. This was the Society of Jesus, founded by Ignatius Loyola in 1534. The chief purposes of its creation were to stem the swelling tide of Protestantism in Europe and to spread the Catholic faith among infidel peoples in every quarter of the globe. Its chosen motto, *Ad majorem Dei gloriam*[1] (To the greater glory of God), was a fitting expression of its exalted program for the spiritual regeneration of the race.

The career of the Society in Europe, for two hundred years after its founding, forms one of the strangest and most fascinating pages in the history of Christianity. Its marvelous organization made it the most autocratic power of its time, while the severity of the novitiate through which its members had to pass insured a loyalty and obedience that were superior to every test. The growth of the Society was rapid, for it had come into existence at an opportune time, when the Church needed its powerful arm to extend her sway and defend her against her enemies. It became a mighty power, guiding the destinies of European nations and carrying its influence to the uttermost parts of the earth.

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[1] The monogrammatic form, A. M. D. G., is of universal use in Jesuitic practices.

The proud place which the Society had acquired in the temporal affairs of the world it was destined not to hold, for the very greatness of its power excited the jealousy and hostility of European rulers, who one after another expelled it from their dominions. Finally, in 1773, the Church herself, yielding to the general outcry, decreed its total suppression, and it remained without recognized existence for forty-one years thereafter.

Our present inquiries relate solely to the missionary work of the Society in the western hemisphere, particularly in the western portion of the United States. The spread of the gospel among heathen peoples was a fundamental purpose of the Society. The discovery of America, with its vast but unknown population, offered a field of labor which from the first was one of great attractiveness. The Jesuits came early to America, and their missionary work on this continent has gone hand in hand with exploration and settlement, except in the English colonies. They went to Florida about the time of the founding of St. Augustine, but remained only a few years. They were in Mexico at a very early day, and in 1697 founded a mission at Loretto in Lower California which became the forerunner of the famous missions of Upper California, established at a later date by the Franciscans. The Jesuits themselves were not permitted to carry out their work in this inviting field. The growing hostility to the order in Europe led to their expulsion from the Spanish dominions in 1767, and on February 3, 1768, the Jesuits in California were all forcibly removed.

The principal work of the Jesuit missionaries in North America was done in Canada and the other possessions of France. Previous to 1629 there had been some progress in missionary work in Acadia and along the St. Lawrence; but in that year Quebec was captured by the English, and Catholic priests were forced to leave. The conquest was not a permanent one and it was restored to France in 1632. Missionary work was thereupon resumed and its prosecution soon fell into the hands of the Jesuits, who entered upon it with heroic zeal and devotion. The missions of New France became exceedingly popular in the parent country. Men of high-born connections entered the Society in the hope that they might be sent to Canada. Nuns and sisters of the Church offered themselves to the work, while the funds to carry it on were freely donated by all classes.

The missionary work of the Jesuits in New France extended from Maine to the Mississippi. The principal fields of labor were among the Abenakis in Maine; the Iroquois in New York; the Hurons in Ontario; the Illinois in the Mississippi valley, and other less important tribes scattered along the way. The zeal and devotion of the missionaries in all their undertakings, and the self-sacrifices they underwent for the sake of the faith, are the bright spots in a story which is one of uniform disaster. There was no faltering amid hardship, no yielding to discouragement, no flinching in the presence of danger; but a complete extinction of all personal considerations and a sublime devotion which looked forward to martyrdom as the most welcome reward of all their labors. Sebastian Rasles, Isaac Jogues, John de Brebeuf, Gabriel Lallemant and others are brilliant names in the Jesuit temple of fame.

In spite of the zeal and herculean toil of the Jesuits in New France, their work did not prosper. Causes beyond their control baffled all their efforts. The Iroquois destroyed the Hurons and the English gained control of the lands of the Iroquois and Abenakis. Traces of the work of the missionaries survived, and many proselytes remained true to their new faith; but the movement as a whole did not realize its expectations.

The same fate overtook the early missionary work farther west. Following the discoveries of Marquette and Joliet and the enterprises of La Salle in the Mississippi valley, the zealous missionary penetrated these new fields, undeterred by the discouragements which he had already encountered. A good beginning was made and missions were planted along the way from the head of Lake Michigan to the Gulf of Mexico. Those in the valley of the Mississippi were governed from New Orleans and not from Canada. Although established with much promise of success, the same general causes which had proven fatal to the other missions soon began to operate here. The incompatibility of the Indian nature with the new order of life, the constant clashing of hostile tribes with one another, the irresistible progress of the English, which finally drove France from the soil of North America, were all against the success of the missions. To crown the difficulties with which they were contending, the Jesuits presently found themselves without an existence, cast out by the nations of Europe and deserted by the mother Church. Before their restoration a new nation had arisen on the soil where much of their toil had been expended, and had won a boundless expanse of territory beyond the Mississippi. It was in this newly-acquired empire that the Jesuits were to find their next important field of labor.

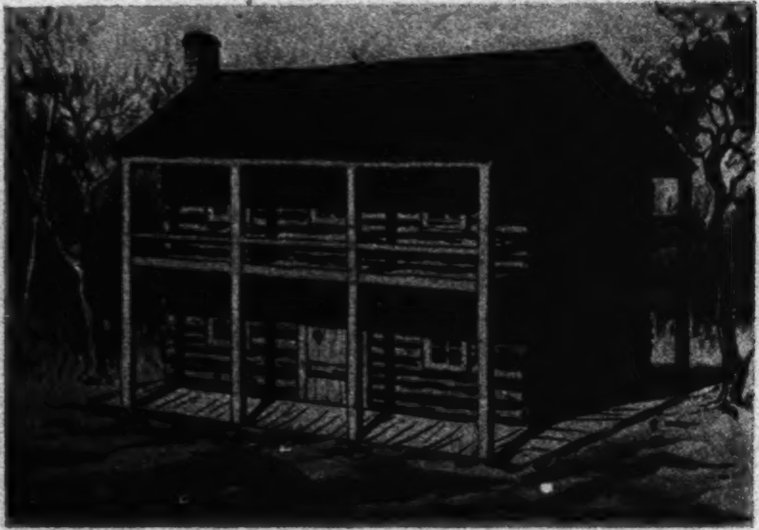
During the forty-one years of its suppression the members of the Society kept in touch with one another, working largely in the ranks of the secular clergy. Most of those who were living in 1773 died before the restoration, but nevertheless the elements of life were kept up, and, as old causes of enmity became forgotten and ancient prejudices were softened away, the Society won back the favor of European nations and was reinstated by the Pope in 1814.

At this time there were a few old Jesuit priests at Whitemarsh in Maryland who founded there the first novitiate of the Society in the United States. About 1820 the affairs of this establishment were in a precarious condition from lack of funds and an abandonment or removal seemed unavoidable; when, in 1823, at the suggestion of John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War, the Right Reverend Du Bourg, Bishop of Louisiana, proposed to Father Van Quickenborne, Master of Novices, that he would be given a tract of land near St. Louis if he would establish a novitiate there. The offer was gladly accepted and steps were at once taken to carry it into effect.

In the company of twelve who set out on the long journey from the Chesapeake to the Mississippi was a youth named De Smet, the subject of the present sketch. The date of departure, April 11, 1823, is a notable one in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States, and the journey was thoroughly characteristic of the pioneer times in which it was made. Two large wagons were hired to convey the heavier articles from Baltimore to the Ohio river, and a light spring wagon for the smaller articles. As to the travelers themselves, they had no other transportation than that which nature had provided them, and they made the entire distance "*pedibus apostolorum,* staff in hand," as Father De Smet puts it. The journey was full of interest in spite of its genuine hardship at that season of the year. The route lay wholly through Protestant communities and most of the people had doubtless never seen a priest before. They imagined the black-gowns to be a band of adventurers, seeking their fortune, and they frequently besought them to remain. The same petition with different motives came from the few Catholics they met, who were longing for the services of a priest.

At Wheeling on the Ohio the travelers purchased two flatboats with the intention of making the descent of the river by water. The boats were lashed together into a single craft, and in this manner the little party made its way, borne by the current, between shores which were then in their natural wildness and beauty. At Louisville they portaged their baggage around the Falls and sent the empty boat over them in charge of a pilot. They then continued their voyage to Shawneetown, Illinois, where the old overland route from Louisville to St. Louis crossed the river. Here they debarked, disposed of their boats, sent most of their baggage by steamboat to St. Louis, and themselves started on foot across the country. It was still early in the spring, the ground was soaked with rain and in many places covered deep with water. Houses were few and far between, and in their absence barns and outhouses were their only shelter. It was a rough and trying journey and they were well-nigh exhausted when, on the last day of May, they found themselves on the east shore of the Mississippi opposite the city of St. Louis. Crossing the river they reached their destination in the future metropolis of the Mississippi valley. For the present, however, they were not to remain there, but to go on some fifteen miles farther to the little village of Florissant, in St. Ferdinand township, where they were to found the second novitiate of the Society of Jesus in the United States.

The new home of the young novices lay directly north of St. Louis not far from the Missouri river. It was a beautiful spot, typical of the attractive rural scenery in the environs of the city. It had formerly been the country seat of one of the Spanish governors of upper Louisiana. Here the little company from Whitemarsh fell to work in earnest, conscious that they were laying the foundation of a great institution in the religious and educational growth of their city and the surrounding country. It was truly an humble beginning for these young men, all of whom had given up homes of comfort and the promise of successful careers in their native land in order to devote their lives to the greater glory of God. "It is at such times," to quote Father De Smet on another occasion, "that one feels the full weight * * * of the sacrifice he makes in a good and holy cause." They must have felt this as they took up their abode in a rude log structure, in the low loft of which seven of their number were crowded together on pallets of straw in a single room. The lower room was divided by a curtain into two parts,



THE INDIAN SEMINARY NEAR FLORISSANT.

in one of which Father Van Quickenborne and a companion lived, the other being used for a chapel. Two small log cabins completed the list of buildings from which the now splendid St. Louis University took its rise. These buildings were enlarged as rapidly as possible, the manual labor being done by the novices themselves.

After a time schools were opened for Indian children, this being an important part of the missionary work of the Society. These schools, however, as has so often been the case, did not thrive as they had been expected to do. The wild nature of the Indian was ill adapted to that kind of life, and it is proof of the high sagacity of Father Van Quickenborne that he early recognized the wisdom of not building all his plans on so precarious a foundation. Although the good father and his companions had dedicated their lives to the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Indians, they soon became convinced "that no great or permanent results could ever be accomplished among the indolent, wandering and indocile aborigines of the woods and prairie which would at all compensate for sacrificing all their energies and resources in exclusive attention to the savages. They came to the conclusion, therefore, that more solid and lasting good might be done among the white population than with the well-nigh indomitable redmen."[2] Without abandoning any of their missionary purposes among the Indians, they resolved to found an institution of learning to meet the growing wants of a great center of population in which the proportion of Catholics was certain to be large. The conception rapidly developed into a concrete result. A suitable building was erected in the city of St. Louis and the reception of students began in the fall of 1829. Father P. J. Verhaegen, one of the seven novices from Whitemarsh but now an ordained priest, was made first president, and Father De Smet was a member of the faculty.

The Jesuits in St. Louis were now fairly well equipped for effective work except in the matter of numbers. These could be had only through the slow process of the novitiate or by recruits from Europe; but as the latter were generally themselves novices, the growth in numbers in early times was very slow.

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[2] *History of the St. Louis University*, p. 36.

In 1831 the Missouri Mission, which had heretofore been a dependency of the Province of Maryland, was made an independent mission. In 1833, October 27, the second Provincial Council of Baltimore petitioned that the Indian missions of the United States be confided to the Society of Jesus. The petition was favorably acted upon at Rome July 26, 1834, and the Society was now about to enter upon the last virgin field of its labors, the vast region, still almost unknown, which was then and is now known as the Far West.

This region, comprising more than half the area of the United States, was still the home of native tribes who were just beginning to be acquainted with the white man through intercourse with the traders. In some portions of the nearer territory, along the lower Missouri, were a few tribes, remnants of the great nations that had once held sway east of the Mississippi, but had been crowded from their homes by the resistless pressure of settlement; but for the most part the tribes were new to the missionary and he was entering an unbroken field. The more important of these tribes, beginning in the lower valley of the Missouri, were the Osages, the Kansas, the Omahas, the Pawnees, the Sioux nations, the Aricaras, the Mandans, the Grosventres of the Missouri, the Assiniboins, the Crows, the Blackfeet, including the Grosventres of the Prairies, the Shoshones with their manifold subdivisions, the Flatheads, Nez Percés, and other tribes of the upper Columbia valley, and finally the almost numberless and nameless tribes of the Pacific Coast. It was into this vast field that the Jesuits of St. Louis were about to enter, under the leadership of the greatest and most practical missionary who has ever labored among the Indian tribes of the United States.

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CHAPTER II.

EARLY LIFE OF FATHER DE SMET.

Ancestry and youth — Choice of missionary career — Leaves Belgium for America — Enters Whitemarsh Novitiate — Goes to St. Louis — Helps found Novitiate and University — Returns to Europe — Sends contributions to University — Returns to America — Goes to Council Bluffs — Work at the Potawatomi Mission — Visits the Sioux Country — Describes evils of liquor traffic among the Indians.

PIERRE-JEAN DE SMET was born in the village of Termonde, Belgium, at the very beginning of the 19th century.[1] His family, which has been traced back to the beginning of the 17th century, was one of the most respectable in Belgium, and the young De Smet came into the world in circumstances that assured him a satisfactory beginning in life. The parents, too, found in their offspring all the promise which they could well desire. He was a well-formed, healthy, and handsome child, and as his mental and spiritual faculties began to develop, they were in harmony with his physical qualities. His early years were spent at his parents' home, but when he became old enough to take up the more serious educational work of youth, he was sent to the Seminary of Malines where he remained until his twenty-first year.

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[1] Entry in the baptismal register of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Termonde, copied by C. L. Tede, the present dean or chief pastor, 1902.

"In the year 1801 on the 30th day of the month of January, I baptized Pierre-Jean, born this morning at about five o'clock, and Coleta Aldegunda, born at a quarter after five, twin children of Judocus De Smet of this parish and Joanna Maria Buydens, of this parish, his wife; the sponsors were John Baptiste Kollier of Smerrebe and Coleta De Saeger of Bottelière.

(Signed) J. C. Ringoot, Pastor of B. V. M. of Termonde."

The father of Father De Smet was Josse-Arnaud De Smet, born April 28, 1738, and died February 15, 1827; was twice married — first to Jeanne-Marie Duerinck, by whom he had six children; and second, to Marie-Jeanne Buydens by whom he had nine children, Pierre-Jean being the fifth. Two of his brothers, Charles and Francis, grew to adult years, and both were men of character and distinction in their native land.

In school, the young De Smet was a distinguished pupil, and in particular exhibited those solid qualities of tact and common sense which did him such great service in after years. He was also noted for his great physical strength and skill in youthful sports. So prominent was his superiority in these respects that his school-fellows gave him the nick-name of Samson.

These qualities of body and mind were associated with a fervent and sentimental nature, and the course of events at this time was such as naturally to turn his mind to a religious career. The Church was strong in Flanders and young De Smet's youth was spent in a religious atmosphere. The fiery ordeal of the French Revolution was past and the natural reaction led men to look with renewed favor upon the ancient church which had stood unscathed the tempests of that fierce time. It was also about the time when De Smet entered the seminary that the Jesuit Society was restored. Whatever the particular influences, it is apparent that while yet at the seminary, De Smet had made up his mind to follow a religious life, and probably to enter the Society of Jesus. He had also formed a purpose of becoming a missionary and would naturally turn to the religious order whose principal purpose was that kind of work.

De Smet was near the close of his seminary career when an event occurred that solved all doubts and settled the young student definitely in his future career. Father Charles Nerinckx, a native of Brabant, whom the events of the French Revolution had driven across the sea, and who had then become a zealous missionary, appeared in Belgium at this time in quest of funds and recruits. His vivid pictures of the untilled field in the New World and his fervent appeal for workers roused the enthusiasm of the young students at Malines and six of their number, among them De Smet, volunteered to go.[2]

The deep meaning of a decision like this it is not easy now to appreciate. It was not simply the giving up of the natural pursuits and pleasures of life to follow a religious career, but it meant practical expatriation and a literal exchange of the pleasures of civilization for a life among barbarous people. It required an open and unselfish nature, and an abundant fund of spiritual faith to take the step. It was literally following the injunction of the divine Teacher — "Sell that thou hast and * * * follow me."

Van Assche seems to have been the first of the young men to decide to go to America. Imparting his plan to his schoolmate Elet the latter also determined to go. John B. Smedts was the next recruit and then followed De Smet, Verreydt and Verhaegen. It was an exceptional group of young men in more ways than one, and their subsequent careers were in a high degree creditable to themselves, their Society, and their native and adopted countries. In nothing is their high character better shown than in this early decision as to their life work. In one case, at least, that of De Smet, and probably in others, the step was contrary to parental counsel. The young men were even compelled to pawn their personal belongings to raise the necessary funds for the journey, and the way in which they rendezvoused on the Island of Texel before embarking does not indicate any joyous Godspeed on the part of the friends behind.

The decision once made, preparations for carrying it into effect swiftly followed. The little band presently found themselves on board the brig *Columbus* at the Island of Texel in July, 1821, en route for America. The voyage was a prosperous one, though slow, for steamboats had not yet crossed the ocean, and it took forty days to reach Philadelphia. Here, we are told, young De Smet was greatly surprised to find good buildings, as all his mental pictures of the America to which he was going were of an untamed wilderness, the home of wild Indians. But if he was astonished to find himself in a well-settled and highly-civilized country, the time was to come when he should find wilderness enough to satisfy him.

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[2] Felix Verreydt, Judocus Van Assche, Pierre J. Verhaegen, Jean Smedts, Jean Elet, and Pierre-Jean De Smet.

The young men visited Baltimore, Washington and Georgetown and finally entered the Jesuit novitiate at Whitemarsh to commence their long career as novices. We have related how a second novitiate came to be established at Florissant near St. Louis, and how, in something less than two years after their arrival in America, De Smet and his companions found themselves on the western shore of the Mississippi.

The years that followed before the end of De Smet's novitiate were naturally void of much interest, for the kind of life that the novices led offered little of excitement or unusual occurrence. The young student bore his full share in the work of the novitiate, helped erect the buildings, and was particularly relied upon in getting out the timber for the work. His great physical strength and restless energy won for him a fame which survives to this day and doubtless has assumed something of an apocryphal character. It was said that he accomplished three times as much work in a given time as any of his associates, and that he was always called upon when it was a question of cutting large trees, carrying heavy loads, etc. He was first at his task and last to leave, and in whatever of manual toil presented itself he did more than his full share.

[illegible] his studies likewise he made good progress, and he [illegible] one of the first teachers in the new university. He finished his novitiate and was ordained priest in 1827 and we shall henceforth give him the title by which he is universally known, Father De Smet.

At this time Father De Smet was a man of unusual attractiveness in his personal appearance. His face was full and frank in its expression, beaming with the natural buoyancy and good humor of his temperament. His stature was rather short for his otherwise heavy build and gave him an appearance of greater corpulency than he really possessed. In his full maturity his weight was above two hundred pounds. With advancing years the dignity of manhood's estate and the venerable figure of age became him well, and he was always noted for his commanding presence no less than for his mild and benevolent manner.[3]

In 1833 Father De Smet's health was in bad condition from some cause, and he was permitted to visit Europe. He was also charged with business for the Society, the particular purpose being to procure recruits for the work, and funds, instruments, books and other things for the new university. It has been stated that he contemplated never returning to the United States, but this is evidently not so. Besides his own recorded statement that he went abroad on business for the Society and for the benefit of his health, the fact that he took out his final naturalization papers and became a citizen of the United States[4] just before starting on his voyage, effectually negatives any such supposition.

Father De Smet reached Europe late in the year 1833 and went directly to his old home in Termonde. He remained in Belgium during the greater part of 1834 and succeeded in getting three recruits and an important outfit of instruments for the university. He then embarked at

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[3] Passport, signed by William H. Seward, October 17, 1864, gives the following description: Age, sixty-four; stature, five feet seven; forehead, ordinary; eyes, blue; nose, ordinary; mouth, middle size; chin, round; hair, gray; complexion, natural; face, full.

[4] September 23, 1833.

Antwerp to return to America, but during the passage of the North Sea he was taken violently ill, and the physician advised him not to continue the voyage. He accordingly landed at Deal in England and returned to Termonde. He arranged to have the instruments sent on without him and they were received at the university March 7, 1835.[5]

Father De Smet now remained two years in Europe devoting his time to the procurement of funds and recruits for the missions and a further equipment for the university. During this period he sent to St. Louis several thousand volumes of books and a large number of fine church pictures. In 1837 he set out for America with three candidates for the priesthood and reached St. Louis after an absence of four years.

The time had now arrived when Father De Smet was to take up in earnest the great work of his life. In the spring of 1838 he was sent with Father Verreydt and two lay brothers to found a mission among the Potawatomies, a part of whom were then located about where the city of Council Bluffs, Iowa, now stands. There were also several other tribes or bands of Indians in the same vicinity, some of whom, like the Potawatomies, were remnants of eastern tribes transferred to new lands west of the Mississippi. It was considered an inviting and important field of labor.

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[5] "Whilst he was absent in Europe, and after his donations were received, the trustees of the university entered on their records the following honorable tribute to him as a benefactor:—

"'Whereas the board and faculty of the St. Louis University are highly indebted to the liberality and exertions of the Rev. P. J. De Smet, for the splendid apparatus of physical and chymical instruments received at the university on the 7th of March, 1834;

"'*Resolved*, that, besides the special thanks already tendered by the board and faculty of the St. Louis University to said Rev. P. J. De Smet on receipt of the above-mentioned apparatus of physical and chymical instruments, the register of the contributions to the Museum of St. Louis University be opened with a copy of this resolution, and his name be placed at the head of the list of contributors to the museum.

P. J. Verhaegen.
James Van de Velde, Secretary.

St. Louis University, Sept. 5, 1836.'"

(Historical sketch of St. Louis University, by Father Walter H. Hill, S. J., p. 58.)

Father De Smet left St. Louis by the steamboat *Howard* May 10, 1838, in company with the Father Superior, who wanted to visit the Kickapoo Indians near Fort Leavenworth. The rest of the party were to follow a few days later by another boat. After a brief delay at Leavenworth Father De Smet bade good-bye to the Father Superior and joined his companions on the *Wilmington*. They arrived at the site of the proposed mission on the 31st of May.

The outlook was discouraging. There were Indians enough, but instead of being eager for missionaries, as had been represented, they seemed wholly indifferent. Nevertheless the fathers set vigorously to work and in a short time began to arouse an interest among the Indians. They seem to have first occupied an abandoned fort turned over to them by Colonel S. W. Kearny; but Father De Smet says that they also erected a small house. The mission was named St. Joseph, although it has been more frequently referred to as St. Mary.[9] It was located within the present city limits of Council Bluffs, Iowa. Father De Smet, who put a cross on the roof of the church, wittily relates that when he "climbed the ladder to put it in place * * * Father Felix [Verreydt] beheld the devil clap his tail between his legs and take flight over the big hills."

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[9] *"Nous érigeames une residence et une petite église en bois à l'honneur de St. Joseph."* De Smet Letter, Book IV, p. 133. Shea (*Catholic Missions*, p. 462), says that the new church was built under the protection of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph. This last statement may account for the confusion as to the proper name of this mission.

St. Joseph's Mission at Council Bluffs seems to have been maintained for only three or four years. Father De Smet mentions it when he passed there in 1840, but not in 1842 nor in 1846. In 1838 Father De Smet founded another mission among a band of Potawatomies, recently arrived from east of the Mississippi. This mission was on Sugar Creek, a tributary of the Osage on the south, and seventeen miles west of the Kansas-Missouri line. In 1847 and 1848 the Potawatomies were moved to the banks of the Kansas river and a new mission was started there September 9, 1848. It became one of the most important and influential of the Indian missions and was frequently visited by Father De Smet, who took a deep interest in its welfare.

In the year 1839 Father De Smet made an excursion to the Sioux post at the mouth of Vermillion river, a short distance above where Sioux City now stands. He left the mission April 29 by the American Fur Company steamboat *St. Peters,*[7] and returned about the middle of May by canoe. The purpose of Father De Smet's mission to the Sioux at this time was to bring about peace between them and the Potawatomies. It was the first of many similar excursions in which he went, comparatively alone and unprotected, among Indians whose friendship was doubtful.

The Potawatomi mission at Council Bluffs is of particular interest in this narrative, not so much for the results that it accomplished, as because it reveals at this early date the full character of Father De Smet as an Indian missionary. It was here that he began that famous series of letters which have made his name well known throughout the world. A few of those written at St. Joseph Mission have already been published; but the most interesting and important are now given out for the first time. They were probably not intended for publication, for they lack something of the clerical dignity in which the writer then doubtless thought that he ought to appear in public; but they are all the better for the omission and are equal, in force of expression, to anything he afterward produced. No more racy narrative is to be found in the pioneer literature of the period than the account of the voyage on the *Wilmington* from Fort Leavenworth to St. Joseph Mission in 1838; while the journal of 1839, copied in a letter written in December of that year, is of genuine historic value as a living picture of the state of things among the frontier tribes at that time. A single example will serve to show the fresh and vigorous manner in which the young missionary dealt with subjects that fell under his observation. Speaking of the liquor traffic, which never failed to arouse his indignation, he writes: "A war of extermination appears preparing around the poor Potawatomies. Fifty large cannons have been landed ready charged with the most murderous grape shot, each containing thirty gallons of whiskey, brandy, rum or alcohol. The boat was not as yet out of sight when the skirmishing commenced. After the fourth, fifth and sixth rounds, the confusion became great and appalling. In all directions men, women and children were seen tottering and falling; the war-whoop, the merry Indian song, cries, savage roarings, formed a hideous medley. Quarrel succeeded quarrel; blow followed blow. The club, the tomahawk, spears, butcher knives, brandished together in the air. Strange! astonishing! only one man, in this dreadful affray, was lost — drowned in the Missouri. Another was severely stabbed and several noses were lost."

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[7] On the *St. Peters* was a Government exploring party under the celebrated geographer Jean N. Nicollet, whom Father De Smet knew well.

Father De Smet pictures what he saw in unvarnished colors. In particular he portrayed the evils of the abominable liquor traffic in a more forcible light than had ever been done before. It is to be regretted that his trenchant and scathing denunciations of this crime were not made public at the time. His published letters were carefully pruned by his superiors of whatever savored too much of hostile criticism of the Government. He states that he wrote to the department on the subject, but the letter is not among his retained copies. If his accounts are true, and there is no reason to doubt it, these letters stand as a perpetual indictment against the Government for having permitted this hideous tragedy to be enacted within its territory.

The experience was a new one to Father De Smet, and it was his first real contact with the race to whose spiritual welfare he had dedicated his life work. It is plain to see that his first impression was a dubious one. The revolting uncleanness, the lack of energy in work, the love of whiskey and debauchery, and the impenetrability of the Indian mind to the abstract notions of religion, all made the prospect seem anything but flattering. He saw in their full force the great obstacles that were always to be encountered in the attempt to improve the condition of the Indian, particularly where he had come into contact with the white man. The weakness of the Indian in the presence of temptation, and the greed of the white man, which was always placing temptation in his way, were everywhere in constant evidence. Nowhere in our Indian literature is there to be found a more graphic and faithful picture of the wrongs which the Indian suffered in the inevitable displacement of his race by the whites, than in these few fragmentary notes written at the St. Joseph mission of the Potawatomies.

CHAPTER III.

A ROMANCE OF AN INDIAN MISSION.

Nez Percé and Flathead Indians — The Iroquois among the Flatheads — Deputation of 1831 to St. Louis — Fact and fiction concerning same — The mythical oration — Its far-reaching influence — The Protestants send missionaries to Oregon — New deputation from the Flatheads — The Jesuits decide to respond.

THE Indian tribes in what is now western Montana, northern Idaho, and eastern Washington were a peculiar people in the matter of their susceptibility to religious influences. Especially true was this of the Flatheads and Nez Percés (Pierced Noses),[1] the only Indians who, of their own volition and without ever having seen a priest, have sought the services of missionaries. They were naturally of a turn of mind that was easily moved by religious teachings, and were relatively high in the scale of morality as measured by the Indian standard.

As early as 1811 or 1812 the traders of the Northwest and Pacific Fur Companies were among them, and their territory remained a fruitful field in the fur trade until settlement took possession of the country. The rank and file of the trapping fraternity were made up of Canadian half-breeds who, in spite of their lawless and irreligious lives, were staunch Roman Catholics. With them, strange to say, were many Iroquois, children of the tribe who had shut their doors to the missionaries a hundred and fifty years before. They were apparrently descendants of the converts of a later period; but whatever the origin of their religious belief, it was now ardent and strong. It is a singular fact that the tribe who cast out the missionaries with such relentless rigor should thus have been, through their children, a means of introducing them to other tribes of whose existence their fathers never heard. Irving gives in *Astoria* the names of the first two individuals of these classes that arrived on the Lower Columbia — Regis Brugière, a half-breed, and Ignace Shonowane, an Iroquois.[3]

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[1] How those names came to be applied to these two tribes has always been a mystery. There was nothing in the practices of either that could suggest them.

The half-breeds and Iroquois circulated freely in quest of furs among the tribes of the Columbia Basin. They told these tribes of the priests of Canada — the famous black-gowns who taught the only true religion. Upon the susceptible minds of the Flatheads their accounts made a deep impression. They eagerly sought further knowledge and even learned such of the religious rites and customs of the Church as their ignorant preceptors could communicate. They became much concerned about their own spiritual state. If what was told them was true — that their religion was false and that they were all in danger of perdition and could be rescued therefrom only by embracing the new faith — was it not high time for them to learn what that faith was? These considerations crept into their minds slowly, not through any direct missionary preaching, but from the casual hints of the irreligious trappers who now and then talked with them on the subject, and perhaps even sought to work upon their feelings from mere motives of curiosity or amusement.

A dozen years or more of this intercourse had aroused a deep desire to have instruction directly from the black-gowns themselves. Doubtless the Iroquois and the half-breeds also longed to see a priest again and resume the observance of their religious duties. The problem of securing one did not seem so very difficult to them. From two directions there was an established route of travel from the homes of the black-gowns to their country. There was the Canadian route from Montreal and Quebec; but it lay far to the north and the distance was very great. This was a natural route, however, considering the origin of the Iroquois and half-breeds, and it is not clear why they did not receive instruction from that direction. The other route was to St. Louis. It was much shorter, and every year the caravans of the traders came to the very borders of their country. It was a comparatively safe undertaking to send messengers to St. Louis with the traders. Furthermore, it was from that direction that the great explorers, Lewis and Clark, whom they held in sacred veneration, had come to their country. One of them still lived in St. Louis, and they well knew that his heart would be open to them if they could but see him and lay their petition before him.

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[3] It is said that the Iroquois went to the Rocky Mountains in a company of about twenty-four. Whether the Ignace Shonowane of Irving was one of the number does not appear, but the name Ignace was a great one among the little band and shows from what past associations it must have sprung. The leader of these Iroquois was Ignace La Mousse, or Old Ignace, called the "Apostle of the Flatheads," who deserves to be canonized among the saints of the tribe. He early acquired a great influence over the Flatheads and it was largely upon his initiative that deputations were sent to St. Louis for the purpose of securing religious teachers.

The first deputation to make this journey, though whether Flathead or Nez Percé is not entirely clear, was in 1831 and consisted of four Indians. Whether these Indians accompanied the return caravan of the traders, which usually reached St. Louis in the beginning of October, does not appear, but it is probable that they did. The date of their arrival, which was about October 1, would confirm this view. In St. Louis the deputation called upon General Clark and visited the Catholic church. The complete change of life which residence in a city entailed was very hard on them, and they all fell ill, and two of their number died about a month after their arrival. They were attended by a priest and gave evidence of their knowledge of the Catholic faith by fervently seizing the crucifix when shown to them, and holding it with such tenacity that it was taken away only after death. The records of burial of these two Indians are in the books of the old Catholic Cathedral in St. Louis.[3]

And now an event took place which converted this simple yet inspiring episode into a thrilling romance that stirred the religious heart of the entire country. The Wyandot Indians were among the last of the tribes east of the Mississippi to take up homes to the westward of that stream. At this particular time the Government was trying to induce them to move, and they were investigating the question. They sent a party to explore the country, and among the number was one William Walker, an interpreter and himself a member of the nation. The party arrived in St. Louis about November 5, 1831, and before proceeding further Walker called upon General Clark. The General directed his attention to the presence of the Indian chiefs in the next room, all of whom were sick, one having died a few days previously. Mr. Walker went into the room to see them and he tells us how their personal appearance impressed him. When he came out General Clark explained to him the purpose of their visit.

A significant fact in Walker's description of his visit to these Indians is that he represents them as genuine *flatheads,* their heads exhibiting the well-known artificial deformity practiced by some of the Coast tribes, but never, according to all information, by the Flatheads themselves. This fact can be accounted for only on the supposition that the deputation was composed of Nez Percé Indians who

[3] Le trent et un d'Octobre mil huit cent trent et un, Je, sousigné ai inhumé dans le Cemetière de cette Paroisse le corps de Keepellelé ou Pipe Bard du Nez Percé de la tribu de Chopoweck Nation appellée Têtes Plates agé d'environ quarante quatre ans, administré du St. Baptême venant de la rivière Columbia au dela des Rocky Mountains.

Edm. Saulinier, Pr.

Le dix sept de Novembre mil huit cent trent et un, Je, sousigné, ai inhumé dans le Cemetière de cette Paroisse le corps de Paul sauvage de la Nation des Têtes Plattes venant de la rivière Columbia au dela des Rocky Mountains, administré du St. Baptême et de l'extrême onction.

Roux, Pr.

did, to some extent, follow the custom of flattening the head. There is indeed much evidence that this is the true fact in the case. They were neighbors of the Flatheads, and like them religiously inclined. The record of burial of one of the chiefs at St. Louis describes him as a Nez Percé of the Chopunnish tribe (another name for the Nez Percés), called the Flathead nation. A letter written by one H. McAllister of St. Louis, April 17, 1833, in reference to this deputation, states that it was "from the Chopunnish tribe, residing on Lewis river, above and below the mouth of the Koos-koos-ka (Clearwater) river, and a small band of Flatheads that live with them." This information was apparently derived from General Clark. There are other authorities to the same end.

The question is therefore a doubtful one as to who these Indians really were, with the weight of evidence in favor of the Nez Percé identity instead of the Flatheads of Father De Smet. But whatever the truth, it does not affect the important fact that their visit produced a profound impression among all classes when it came to be generally known. It was given wide notoriety through the columns of the *Christian Advocate*. Under date of February 18, 1833, one G. P. Disoway of New York sent a letter to this journal, inclosing another from William Walker describing the circumstances of his call upon General Clark.[4] The publication of Disoway's letter called forth a spirited editorial in the issue of March 22, 1833, exhorting the Church to take the matter up at once and respond to a call which appealed so powerfully to the Christian conscience of the world. Additional correspondence appeared in the issue of May 10, 1833, and the whole subject had by this time become familiar to Protestant churches throughout the United States.

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[4] Walker's letter was dated Upper Sandusky, January 19, 1833. Both the Disoway and Walker letters were published March 1, 1833. In Mr. Disoway's letter the writer speaks of Mr. Walker as having made his expedition to St. Louis and the proposed Wyandot lands "in November last," which would clearly fix the date of the Flathead deputation in 1832 instead of 1831, and this is the date universally accepted by Protestant missionary writers upon the subject. Through these letters the author of this sketch was led into the same error in his *American Fur Trade of the Far West*, p. 643. See, among other authorities, records of Indian Superintendency at St. Louis now in possession of the Kansas Historical Society at Topeka; and a letter from Bishop Rosati of St. Louis dated December 31, 1831, published in the *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, and quoted by Palladino in his *Indian and White in the Northwest*, p. 11.

There grew out of the event a curious myth, to the effect that on the eve of the departure of the surviving Indians for their home they were given a banquet, and that at this banquet one of the Indians delivered a speech, in which he declared that he and his companions had not found what they came for and must therefore go home disappointed to a disappointed people. The writer has never seen the smallest evidence that this reported speech was genuine, nor any as to who the real author was.[5] The speech itself, by whomsoever prepared, holds a prominent place in the history of the Protestant Missions in the Columbia valley, and is here given in full:

"I come to you over the trail of many moons from the setting sun. You were the friends of my fathers, who have all gone the long way. I came with an eye partly open for my people, who sit in darkness. I go back with both eyes closed. How can I go back blind, to my blind people? I made my way to you with strong arms through many enemies and strange lands that I might carry back much to them. I go back with both arms broken and empty. Two fathers came with us, they were the braves of many winters and wars. We leave them asleep here by your great waters and wigwams. They were tired in many moons and their moccasins wore out.

"My people sent me to get the 'White Man's Book of Heaven.' You took me to where you allow your women to dance as we do not ours, and the book was not there. You took me to where they worship the Great Spirit with candles and the book was not there. You showed me images of the good spirits and the pictures of the good land beyond, but the book was not among them to tell us the way. I am going back the long and sad trail to my people in the dark land. You make my feet heavy with gifts and my moccasins will grow old in carrying them, yet the book is not among them. When I tell my poor blind people after one more snow, in the big council, that I did not bring the book, no word will be spoken by our old men or by our young braves. One by one they will rise up and go out in silence. My people will die in darkness, and they will go a long path to other hunting grounds. No white man will go with them, and no White Man's Book to make the way plain. I have no more words."

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[5] It is said, upon the questionable authority of the Rev. H. H. Spalding, who went to Oregon with Marcus Whitman, that a clerk of the American Fur Company in St. Louis overheard the speech and wrote it up and sent it to his friends in Pittsburg.

The return of these Indians to their country is another matter about which there is great uncertainty. The orthodox version, as given by the latest writer on the subject,* is that they returned by the American Fur Company steamboat in the spring of 1832 as far as to the mouth of the Yellowstone whence they made their way home; that George Catlin, who was a passenger on the same boat, painted their pictures and that these are now numbers 207 and 208 in his well-known gallery of Indian paintings; and that the tribe at home agreed to go on their annual buffalo hunt to the Judith Basin on the Upper Missouri earlier than usual in the summer of 1832, in order to meet them. It can only be said of this version that it is extremely doubtful. No steamboat had ever yet ascended the Missouri anywhere near the mouth of the Yellowstone, and there had been no trading post built farther up than this point when the deputation left home in 1831. They could not, therefore, have expected a steamboat as far as the Yellowstone or any other craft beyond that point, and any pre-arranged plan to meet the Indians, based upon such a voyage, would

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*By Mrs. Eva Emery Dye, in *The Conquest.*

have been wholly impossible. Moreover it would have been extremely hazardous for these Indians, alone as they would have been, to have traversed the territory of their enemies the Blackfeet. Finally, every consideration would have led them to return by the way they went, and while they may have traveled from St. Louis to Independence (near Kansas City) by boat, they probably joined the regular caravan at that point. The annual rendezvous of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company for 1832 was in Pierre's Hole, on the borders of their country, and here in fact a large band of both the Nez Percé and Flathead Indians were gathered. May they not have been looking for their absent brethren, and would not this have been the natural place to expect them?

As to the Catlin pictures the facts are even more uncertain. It is well known that, as an authority on historical or even descriptive matters, Catlin did not stand well, and his claim may be simply the embellished account of some commonplace incident. His general carelessness of statement is illustrated in his reference to the two men who died in St. Louis as "old and venerable men," whereas the record of their burial gives their age as about forty-one years. There were always Indians on the boats of the American Fur Company and generally in considerable numbers and of different tribes. The artist had no lack of subjects, and his subsequent identification of these particular two Indians as the ones who visited General Clark in the fall of 1831 cannot be accepted without question.

But again the manner of their journey home, or whether they ever reached there, like that of the mythical oration, is of comparatively little importance. The great fact is that they had sown seed in fertile ground. They had aroused the Christian spirit throughout the United States and the result was a prompt response to their call. In the year following that of the publications in the *Christian Advocate* the Methodists sent out two missionaries, Jason and Daniel Lee. These missionaries did not stop among the Flatheads or Nez Percés but went on to the Willamette Valley. In 1835 Marcus Whitman and Samuel Parker were sent out by the Presbyterians to investigate the field, and upon arriving at Green river were so favorably impressed that Doctor Whitman returned to report to the Board and recommend the forming of missions. While at home he married, and in the following year himself and bride, with Reverend H. H. Spalding and wife, started for their remote field of work. Doctor Whitman established himself among the Cayuses at Waiilatpu, near the Walla Walla river, while the Reverend Mr. Spalding commenced work among the Nez Percés at Lapwai.

Considered simply on the basis of evangelizing the Indian tribes, the Protestant missions in these parts were not a success. To the clear-sighted men who had founded them, it was apparent that they never could succeed. In one of his letters written from the mission Doctor Whitman said:

"I have no doubt our greatest work is to be to aid the white settlement of this country and help to found its religious institutions. Providence has its full share in all those events. Although the Indians have made, and are making, rapid advancement in religious knowledge and civilization, yet it cannot be hoped that time will be allowed to mature the work of Christianization or civilization before white settlers will demand the soil and the removal of both of the Indians and the missions.

"What Americans desire of this kind they always effect, and it is useless to oppose or desire it otherwise. To guide as far as can be done, and direct these tendencies for the best, is evidently the part of wisdom."

Such was likewise the feeling on the part of the Lees on the Willamette. So it resulted that these men became rather the forerunners of American civilization in Oregon than successful missionaries to the Indian tribes. Marcus Whitman in particular looked with a jealous eye upon his country's rights in that great region. In no other light can his famous journey back to the States in the winter of

1842–3 be explained, and however much his motives have been impugned, his name has become indelibly fixed in the national heart as one of its great heroes. The tragedy which awaited him upon his return, when he and his beloved Christian wife fell victims to savage cruelty, has made him a true martyr both to the cause which he nominally represented of Christianizing the Indians and to what he regarded the far greater cause of establishing American possession and civilization in the Columbia Valley.

The immediate result of the deputation of 1831 was therefore to start a Protestant missionary movement in Oregon. The Jesuits at St. Louis were still too weak in numbers to respond. They had had but very few recruits since the opening of the novitiate, and all these were needed in the new work incident to founding the university. It was impossible to spare any workers for this distant field.

In 1835 another deputation went to St. Louis. It appears that a Flathead chief, Insula by name, went to the Green river rendezvous in 1835 to meet the missionaries whom his people supposed to be Black-gowns, but who proved to be Protestant ministers. As they did not satisfy the description which the Indians had heard of the Catholic priests, Insula returned home and it was decided to send a deputation to St. Louis to ask for them. It was old Ignace who undertook the expedition and he took with him his two sons to have them baptized. He made the journey in the summer of 1835.[7] The little party reached St. Louis in safety; the sons were baptized December 2d with the Christian names Charles and Francis; and Ignace went to Bishop Rosati with his request for missionaries. In the following spring he returned home with his sons, where one of them, Francis, is still living.

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[7] Father Palladino, *Indian and White in the Northwest*, p. 19, says that "Ignace started with the intention of going to Canada, the place of his birth, where he thought he could more easily obtain missionaries for the Flatheads, which, as said, was the main object of his long, perilous journey. Learning, however, on his way that there were Jesuit Fathers at St. Louis, he turned his steps in that direction, and reached the place late in the fall, after frightful privations and sufferings." This, if true, is another indication that the 1831 deputation was not from the Flatheads, or they would have known of the presence of Jesuits in St. Louis, unless indeed none of the deputation succeeded in getting home.

In 1837 a third deputation started for St. Louis. It consisted of old Ignace, three Flatheads, and one Nez Percé. At Fort Laramie they fell in with a party of white men traveling in their direction, among them one of the Protestant ministers, W. H. Gray, returning from Oregon. At Ash Hollow on the North Platte, where the road started to cross over to the ford of the South Platte, the Indians were attacked by a band of Sioux. The whites were ordered to stand apart, as it was not intended to molest them. Ignace, being dressed as a white man, was mistaken for one and ordered apart with the rest, but heroically refused to abandon his companions. The five Indians were slain and this deputation never reached St. Louis.

A fourth, and this time successful, attempt was made in 1839. A deputation of two Indians, Pierre Gaucher and Young Ignace, set out with a party of trappers who were going to St. Louis. Their route was apparently by the Yellowstone and the Missouri rivers which they descended by canoe. In passing St. Joseph Mission, at Council Bluffs, they stopped to see the priests there, and it is an interesting coincidence that they should have found the very man who was to grant them their request in person and open a new era in the history of their nation. This is Father De Smet's account of their visit:

"On the 18th of last September two Catholic Iroquois came to visit us. They had been for twenty-three years among the nation called the Flatheads and Pierced Noses, about a thousand Flemish leagues from where we are. I have never seen any savages so fervent in religion. By their instructions and examples they have given all that nation a great desire to have themselves baptized. All that tribe strictly observe Sunday and assemble several times a week to pray and sing canticles. The sole object of these good Iroquois was to obtain a priest to come and finish what they had so happily commenced. We gave them letters of recommendation for our Reverend Father Superior at St. Louis. They thought nothing of adding three hundred leagues to the thousand they had already accomplished, in the hope that their request would be granted."

The two deputies arrived safely in St. Louis and presented themselves to Bishop Rosati, who gave them definite hope of a priest in the following spring. Thereupon one of them, Pierre Gaucher, set out for home, while Ignace remained to accompany the missionary who should be sent. The letter of Bishop Rosati to the Father General of the Society in Rome, detailing the circumstances and result of the visit, is dated October 20, 1839, and states that the Indian was to start the next day. If Pierre Gaucher made his journey home alone at that season of the year (it is said to have taken him all winter) it was a remarkable achievement. He arrived in the Bitter Root Valley, the home of the Flatheads, early in the spring of 1840 and announced to the tribe that a black-gown was surely coming.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FLATHEAD MISSION.

Father De Smet detailed for the Flathead Mission — Journey across the plains — Meeting with Flathead envoys — The welcome at Pierre's Hole — Flattering prospects — Joy of the Indians — Gratitude of Father De Smet — Journey to Three Forks — John Baptiste de Velder — Father De Smet starts home — Passage of the Crow country — Interesting intercourse with the Crows — Dangerous journey to Fort Union — Journey down the Missouri — Agreeable encounter with the Sioux — Arrival in St. Louis — Disappointment in regard to funds — Father De Smet seeks contributions — Signal success — Second journey across the plains — Founding of St. Mary's Mission among the Flatheads — Difficulties and set-backs — Journey to Fort Colville and return — Work at the Mission — Visit to Fort Vancouver and the Willamette — Return to St. Mary's — Departure for St. Louis — Incidents of the journey — Arrival in St. Louis.

WHEN it came to fulfilling the promise made to Ignace and Pierre Gaucher, Father De Smet volunteered to go and the task was assigned to him. It was at first expected to send two priests but it was found impossible to raise the necessary funds. Accordingly Father De Smet was sent alone. He could at least survey the ground and report whether it would be worth while to carry the work farther.

On the 27th of March, 1840, he set out on his long journey. He traveled by steamboat to Westport (Kansas City) and there joined the annual expedition of the American Fur Company to the mountains. It was under charge of a trader, Andrew Drips, well-known in the early history of the west. The party left Westport on April 30, following the general route of the Oregon Trail, and without any untoward event, reached the annual rendezvous on Green river just two months later.

To Father De Smet, full of enthusiasm in his work and with his active mind open to all around him, the long journey was a veritable pleasure tour except that he was unwell much of the time. His letters are filled with interesting notes upon the country, and descriptions of his varied experiences along the way. His buoyant and hopeful demeanor on this journey is a proof of his thoroughly optimistic and cheerful temperament. He was suffering from chills and fever and was at one time in such a state that he had to be carried on a litter fixed up in a wagon. He was strongly urged to turn back; but he felt that too much was at stake, as he was the only person with the expedition that could carry out the work, and his abandonment of it would be a sore disappointment to the Indians. He therefore resolved to keep on. The malaria did not finally leave him until on his way home some three months afterward.

At Green river, to Father De Smet's joy and astonishment, he found a deputation of ten Flathead Indians who had been sent on to meet him after the return of Pierre Gaucher. There were also present other Indians, notably of the Snake nation, and a motley crowd of trappers and hunters,— making in all a curious assemblage such as only a rendezvous of the fur trade in those early times could produce. Father De Smet enjoyed the novelty of it all, and was especially delighted at the prospect of success which the presence of the Flatheads assured. There was an instant bond of sympathy between him and his hosts which made them from the first more brothers than strangers. The Sunday following their arrival a formal mass was celebrated on the prairie — the first ceremony of the kind in the Rocky Mountains north of the Mexican possessions.

After four days delay at the Green river rendezvous, Father De Smet and his Flatheads started to join the main camp. Their route took them through the wonderful valley of Jackson Hole and across the great Teton range into the valley of Pierre's Hole, renowned for its beauty and at one time a famous rendezvous in the fur trade. In Pierre's Hole was the camp of the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles, who had come thus far to the number of about 1,600 to welcome the long-expected black-gown. They had already set up his tent and when he arrived there was the most lively demonstration of joy. They led him to the lodge of the chief, who received him with a touching address of welcome, after which the Father at once began his instructions. With a marvelous eagerness the whole tribe set about learning their religious duties. A bell was presented to Father De Smet to call them to prayers and they were rigidly punctual at all the appointed exercises. The chief was the first up in the morning, and as he aroused his people, "Come, courage, my children," he cried, "open your eyes. Address your first thought and words to the Great Spirit. Tell him that you love him, and ask him to take pity on you. Courage, for the sun is about to appear, it is time you went to the river to wash yourselves. Be prompt at our Father's lodge, at the first sound of the bell; be quiet when you are there; open your ears to hear and your hearts to hold fast all the words that he says to you."

It was in truth a remarkable experience to find the wild tribes of the mountains absorbed in religious teaching with a fervor approaching that of the primitive Christians. To the earnest missionary who had come so far the full reward of his labors was already at hand. It was something far beyond his expectations, and tears of gratitude told of his emotion as the hope of spreading a knowledge of the faith among people ready and capable of receiving it seemed about to be realized. His narrative of these events, as given in his letters, can alone convey an adequate impression of this singular scene in the heart of the wilderness.

After sojourning a short time in Pierre's Hole the entire party took up their march in the direction of the Flathead country. They ascended Henry Fork of Snake river to its source in Henry Lake where they arrived on the 22nd of July. This lake is close to the Continental Divide, and just across the ridge is Red Rock Lake, the ultimate source of the Missouri, 4,221 miles by water-course from the sea. Father De Smet climbed far up the side of a mountain where he could overlook this impressive scene, and then sat down, musing upon the works of God around him and the holy character of the service in which he was engaged. On a rock near him he inscribed a religious sentiment and the date July 27, 1840.

During the next month Father De Smet and his Flathead and Pend d'Oreille friends passed leisurely down the valley of the stream which flows from Red Rock Lake to join the Jefferson river, and down that stream to the Three Forks of the Missouri. His time was spent in instructing the Indians, in listening to their tales of war and peace, and in studying the prospects of missionary work among them. He became convinced that here was a field of genuine promise, and his proposition to establish a mission in their midst was received with the greatest enthusiasm. Father De Smet did not actually go into the Flathead country, which lay across the Divide in the Bitter Root Valley, as he thought it best not to take the time to go there on this occasion; but rather to hasten home, report the situation to his superiors, and get the necessary assistance for the commencement of a permanent mission. He imparted his plan to the Indians, and after giving them his word that he would return, he set out on his journey home.

He had as a companion a man whom he had picked up at the Green river rendezvous. Father De Smet thus describes him:

"A good Fleming of Ghent, John Baptiste de Velder, an old grenadier of Napoleon, who had left his native land at the age of thirty, and had spent the last fourteen years in the mountains in the capacity of beaver hunter, generously offered to serve and assist me in all my wanderings. He was resolved, he said, to pass the remainder of his days in the practice of his holy religion. He had almost forgotten the Flemish language, excepting his prayers and a song which he had learned on his mother's knee and which he repeated every day."

This man staid by Father De Smet in his long and perilous journey back to St. Louis and for a part of the way was his only companion. The Flatheads sent an escort of seventeen men as far as to Fort Alexander, on the Yellowstone. Amid the genuine sorrow of the Indians, tempered, however, by the Father's promise to return the following spring, the little cavalcade took up their route from the Three Forks very much along the modern line of the Northern Pacific Railroad. They crossed the Bozeman pass and reached the Yellowstone river at the Great Bend where Livingston now stands. With imminent danger from the hostile Blackfeet, they made their way down the right bank of the river until they reached a village of the Crow Indians in the Bighorn valley.

Here Father De Smet made new friends, as he always did whenever he met a band of Indians. He traveled with them two days and was forced to accept their burdensome hospitality during all this time. "Since I hide nothing from you," he says in one of his letters, "I hope you will not be scandalized at learning that in a single afternoon I took part in twenty different banquets." The religious teachings, which Father De Smet never failed to press upon his Indian hosts wherever he was, caused some surprise to the ruffian freebooters among whom he found himself. One of the chiefs exclaimed: "I think there are only two in all the Crow nation who will not go to the place you describe; * * * they are the only ones I know of who have never killed nor stolen nor been guilty of the excesses you speak of. I *may* be mistaken about them, and in that case we will all go to hell together." Still Father De Smet made a deep and lasting impression upon this wild tribe. He visited them on a subsequent occasion and was well received by them, and more than once they asked that he plant a mission in their country.

At Fort Alexander, which was the American Fur Company trading post for the Crows, Father De Smet's escort turned back at his request, and he was left with his Flemish friend to make the rest of the journey alone. This post was on the left bank of the Yellowstone opposite the mouth of the Rosebud river. The two travelers set out by land, keeping along the left bank of the river, and with great caution hastened their course to Fort Union on the Missouri, a little above the mouth of the Yellowstone. This journey was one of great risk and peril. They were liable at any moment to be slain by some wandering band of Indians and on one occasion escaped this catastrophe by the narrowest margin. Commenting upon their dangers, Father De Smet made the following beautiful reflection: "Such a solitude, with all its horrors and dangers, has notwithstanding one very real advantage; it is a place where one is constantly looking death in the face, and where it presents itself incessantly to the imagination in the most hideous forms. There one feels in a very special manner that he is wholly in God's hands. It is then easy to offer him the sacrifice of a life which belongs less to you than to the first savage who may see fit to take it; and to form the most generous resolutions a man is capable of. That was, in fact, the best 'retreat' that I have ever made in my life. My only consolation was the object for which I had undertaken the journey; my guide, my support, my refuge, was the fatherly providence of God."

But the great danger did not prevent the good priest from seeing the humorous side of things. On the second day of their journey they were in imminent peril of being discovered by a party of savages whose fresh trail they had come upon. They built no camp fire that night and cooked no supper. "I rolled myself in my blanket," says Father De Smet, "and stretched out on the sod, commending myself to the good God. My grenadier, braver than I, was soon snoring like a steam engine in full swing. Running through all the notes of the chromatic scale, he closed each movement of his prelude with a deep sigh, by way of modulation. As for me, I turned and rolled, but spent a sleepless night."

In due time they reached Fort Union. After a few days of the hospitable entertainment which that fine trading post always furnished to guests of merit, and after having baptized a good many half-breed children, the two travelers resumed their journey September 23d. They went by land down the left bank of the Missouri to near the Mandan village, where they crossed to the right bank. Here were also the Aricaras and the Minnetarees, or Grosventres of the Missouri, all of whom welcomed the black-gown and did all in their power to entertain him. They stopped a short time at Fort Clark, the trading post for these Indians, and then, in company of a Canadian voyageur, set out down the west, or right, bank of the river for Fort Pierre.

On this part of the journey they came near getting into serious trouble. They had stopped for noon in a concealed little nook on the brink of a clear spring, and were congratulating themselves on the security of their position, when they were suddenly pounced upon by a band of Blackfeet-Sioux who had been stealthily following them for some time. The Indians were bedaubed with paint and otherwise decked out as if on the warpath. "I rose at once," says Father De Smet, "and presented my hand to him whom I believed to be the chief of the band. He said coldly, 'Why are you hiding in this ravine?' I answered him that we were hungry and that the spring had invited us to take a moment's repose. He looked at me with wonder, and addressing the Canadian, who could speak the Sioux language a little better, said to him, 'I have never seen such a man in my life. Who is he?' My long black robe and the missionary cross that I bore upon my breast especially excited his curiosity. The Canadian answered (and under the circumstances he was prodigal of his titles): 'It is the man who talks to the Great Spirit. It is a chief Blackgown of the Frenchmen.' His fierce look changed at once; he ordered his warriors to put away their weapons and they all shook hands with me. I made them a present of a big twist of tobacco and everybody sat down in a circle and smoked the pipe of peace and friendship."

Their further entertainment by these Indians was full of interest and it was an introduction to the Sioux nations which neither the Indians nor Father De Smet ever forgot. Although he never had the satisfaction of founding a mission in their midst he made many efforts to do so, and these Indians never ceased while he lived to send messages to him asking him to send them a teacher.

Thus the little party made their way onward amid danger and never-ending surprises. They stopped at Forts Pierre and Vermillion, and at the latter place took a canoe, under the guidance of an Iroquois half-breed. They reached St. Joseph Mission, at Council Bluffs, November 24th, and the river closed with ice the next day. The rest of the journey was made by land, and Father De Smet arrived among his brethren at the St. Louis University on the last day of the year.

Full of enthusiasm over the results of his journey and eager to commence preparations for the return, Father De Smet was not prepared for the deep disappointment that awaited him. "On my arrival at St. Louis," he writes, under date of May 1, 1841, "I gave an account to my superior of my journey and of the flattering prospects which a mission beyond the Rocky Mountains held out. You will easily believe me when I tell you that my heart sank within me on learning from him that the funds at his disposal for missionary purposes would not enable him to afford me scarcely half of what was necessary for the outfit and other expenses of an expedition. The thought that the undertaking would have to be given up, that I would not be able to redeem my promise to the poor Indians, pierced my very heart and filled me with the deepest sorrow. I would have desponded had I not already experienced the visible protection of the Almighty in the prosecution of this great work. My confidence in Him was unabated. Whilst in this state of mind one of my friends encouraged me to appeal to the zealous and learned coadjutor of Philadelphia and to his indefatigable clergy. I immediately acted upon the thought. I did appeal, and with what success the Catholic public already know."

Father De Smet practically took the matter of funds into his own hands, went to New Orleans, and in the course of a few months succeeded in raising the necessary amount from that city and several other sources. His great success on this occasion doubtless accounts for his being sent to Europe so often in after years on similar missions.

The funds being raised and the outfit made up, Father De Smet and his companions set out from St. Louis on the steamer *Oceana* April 30, 1841. The party consisted of two priests besides Father De Smet and three lay brothers. Father Nicholas Point, one of the number, was a most valuable acquisition and did a great work for the mission. He was a skilled draftsman, and left many sketches of the customs of the people among whom he was thrown.[1]

We shall not follow in detail this second long journey over the plains, though its interesting incidents fill many pages in Father De Smet's letters. The little party left Westport May 10th and reached Fort Hall on Snake river about the middle of August. Here they met the advance guard of the Flatheads. Resuming their journey August 19th, they traversed the plain of the Three Buttes to near the junction of Henry Fork with Snake river, and thence followed practically the modern line of the Oregon Short

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[1] "To give them pleasure, the missionary (Point, winter of 1845-46) amused himself in his leisure time by sketching with the pen various historic incidents, taken from their own annals; such, namely, as were most to their taste, such as the moving of a camp, diverse occupations, the work of the chase, fine deeds of arms, amusing or tragic adventures, religious scenes, etc. It would be hard to depict the pleasure that this little collection gave them; but what is much more worth while, it contributed powerfully to increase the authority of the chiefs in the eyes of the young men, and to rouse in the latter a noble emulation for good."—*Indian and White in the Northwest. Palladino.*

Line Railroad to the Deer Lodge valley, where they arrived early in September. The main Flathead camp had joined them while passing through the Beaverhead valley. The party continued their route down the Deer Lodge and Hell Gate valleys to the modern site of Missoula, and then passed up the Bitter Root valley some thirty miles, where they chose the site of their first establishment and commenced work upon it September 24, 1841.

Notwithstanding all they had brought with them for the needs of the mission, it was at once seen that further provisions and tools would have to be procured, and as the nearest point where they could possibly be obtained was Fort Colville on the Columbia, it was decided that Father De Smet should make a journey thither before winter set in. He accordingly left St. Mary's Mission, the name of the new establishment, October 28th, and after a long and trying journey through dense forests and over a rough country he reached his destination in safety. He returned to St. Mary's early in December, having been absent but little over a month.

The missionaries now labored with unabating zeal, in which the Indians joined, to get their establishment into working order. Things were moving so prosperously that, as Father De Smet naively remarks, the jealousy of the demons of darkness was aroused, and they were treated to a few trifling set-backs; as for example the "sickness of the interpreter and sexton" when their assistance was most needed; a hurricane which came near demolishing in an instant all the fruits of their labors; and the church organ accidentally broken by one of the Indians. "All seemed to conspire against them; but the day of baptism arrives and every cloud disappears."

The fathers entered upon the religious portion of their work with determined zeal and devotion. They struck directly at the root of the evils of savage society as they understood them. One of their greatest difficulties was in regulating the subject of marriage. They adopted the principle that there could be but one legitimate marriage and that it must be solemnized according to the forms of the Church. It therefore became necessary for the Indians to choose, and then present themselves before a priest. The fathers had a good deal of trouble, as might naturally be expected, to convince the Indians of the necessity of this and other regulations of civilized society; and with a less well-disposed tribe they would not have succeeded.

Thus the winter of 1841-2 passed away. With the approach of spring Father De Smet decided to visit the lower Columbia for additional supplies, and to get in touch with the new Catholic missionary in that quarter and with the governor of the Hudson Bay Company who resided at Fort Vancouver. He left St. Mary's early in April and went first to Fort Colville. Thence he made his way down the Columbia by skiff, wherever navigation was possible. He had fortunately gone ashore to walk along the bank at the place called the Little Dalles on their second day out from Fort Colville, when the frail craft in which he usually rode was caught by the violent eddies, swamped, and five of the boatmen drowned. He arrived at Fort Vancouver June 8th, where to his great joy he found Father Blanchet and Father Demers, two Canadian priests who had been sent to that country two years before. He visited St. Paul's, the establishment of these priests on the Willamette, and conferred with them about what ought to be done to promote the general work in their respective territories. It was decided that, with the consent of his superiors, Father De Smet should go to Europe for recruits and funds.

Father De Smet also found that he had a most powerful and valuable ally in the venerable John McLoughlin, Governor for the Hudson Bay Company in these parts. This philanthropic and capable man was a power in the Columbia valley in these early years and his generous aid to settlers during the emigration to Oregon has won him a permanent place in the affections of the people of that region.[2]

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[2] See pages 355 and 1553 to 1557 of the *Letters*.

Having accomplished the purpose of his journey, Father De Smet returned to St. Mary's. Both on his way out and back he studied, as was always his wont, the spiritual condition of the tribes through which he passed and the prospects for establishing missions among them. He found the feeling among the Cœur d'Alènes highly promising and he gave these Indians assurances that he would send them priests that very fall. In fulfillment of this promise he directed Father Mengarini to open a mission and leave it in charge of Father Point and Brother Huet.

With all things arranged as far as his humble means would permit, and with assurances to his brethren and the Indians whom he was leaving that he would send them early succor from St. Louis and Europe, Father De Smet set out on his return eastward July 29th. He spent two weeks in the plain of the Three Forks with the Flatheads who were there on a buffalo hunt, and then started for St. Louis by the route of the previous year. He was escorted to the Crow country by twelve Flatheads and had as traveling companions an Iroquois by the name of Ignatius, and a Crow half-breed by the name of Gabriel. His short stay among the Crows was full of interesting experiences, to some of which we shall refer later. He left Fort Alexander with his two companions and also two American hunters and together they made the always perilous journey down the Yellowstone to Fort Union. This is Father De Smet's description of their daily routine of travel: "At daybreak we saddled and set out and at about 10 A. M. we halted for an hour and a half, being careful to choose a place which, in case of attack, might offer some advantage for defense. After this brief rest we resumed our course and kept up a trot until sunset. After our evening meal we built a big fire and hastily constructed a hut from the branches of trees to make our enemies, who might be on the watch, think that we were encamped for the night. * * * Then we pursue our route until ten or eleven o'clock at night when, without fire or shelter, we dispose ourselves as best we can for repose. * * * Each one wraps himself in his buffalo robe, with his saddle for a pillow, and thanks to the fatigues of a forty-mile ride in a burning sun, falls to sleep the moment he lies down."

After a brief and enjoyable delay at Fort Union Father De Smet, with Ignatius and Gabriel, set out in a skiff for St. Louis. On their third day out they had the good fortune to meet a steamboat — the first one that had ever ascended the river so far at that season of the year — and they displayed no false modesty in accepting an invitation to ride in it the rest of the way to St. Louis. After returning with the boat to Fort Union all set out again down the river. The voyage was a tedious and dangerous one. "The waters were low;" says Father De Smet, "the sandbars and snags everywhere numerous; the boat consequently encountered many obstacles in her passage. We were frequently in great danger of perishing. Her keel was pierced with pointed rocks, her sides rent by the snags. Twenty times the wheels had been broken to pieces. The pilot-house had been carried away in the tempest; the whole cabin would have followed if it had not been made fast by a large cable. Our boat appeared to be little more than a mere wreck, and in this wreck, after forty-six days navigation from the Yellowstone, we arrived safely at St. Louis."

In deep gratitude for his preservation amid the manifold dangers that he had passed through, Father De Smet repaired at once to his church and offered up a grateful prayer of thanksgiving for the signal favors he had received.

CHAPTER V.

THE OREGON MISSIONS.

Recruits for the Mission — Goes to Europe — Visits Rome — Sails for Oregon via Cape Horn — Incidents of the voyage — Visits to Chile and Peru — Crossing the Columbia bar — Activities in the Willamette valley — Visit to the interior — Winter among the Kalispels — Visits St. Mary's — Return to the Willamette — Again visits the upper country — Starts in search of the Blackfeet — The Canadian, Morigeau — Failure to find Blackfeet — Passes winter at Fort Augustus — Perils of return journey — Extent of Oregon Missions — Return to St. Mary Mission — Sets out for St. Louis — Battle between Crows and Flatheads — Peace with the Blackfeet — At Fort Lewis — Voyage by skiff down the Missouri — Meeting the Mormons — Arrival in St. Louis — Survey of work in Oregon.

FATHER DE SMET'S enthusiasm and faith in his new work were unbounded. He inspired his superiors with his own confidence and they gave him a free hand to work out his plans. Early in the year 1843 he went as far south as New Orleans and as far east as Boston soliciting funds for his work. He succeeded in getting together a goodly supply of articles needed for the missions and three recruits — Father Peter De Vos, who was made Vice-Superior of the Missions, Father Adrian Hoeken, and Brother J. B. McGean. Father De Smet accompanied the little party on their way as far as Westport, going by the steamer *John Auld.* Near Glasgow, May 1st, they saw the distinguished naturalist Audubon, who was on the American Fur Company boat *Omega* with a party of scientists making an exploration of the Missouri. During Father De Smet's absence three more recruits arrived from Europe, but as they were too late for the expedition they waited in St. Louis until the following year.

Immediately upon his return to St. Louis Father De Smet set out for Europe and after a voyage of twenty-one days landed in Ireland. While there he heard that great man, Daniel O'Connell, speak, and he records the following incident of the occasion, which impressed him deeply as an example of the intense feeling of the Irish people at the time: "An old woman had come many a mile to look at the Liberator. She had forced her way with difficulty through the immense crowd; she had even climbed on the platform from whence O'Connell spoke. I stood near him; she asked me, 'Is this the man?' At my answering yes, she pulled his coat exclaiming, 'Sir, let me look at you!' He turned with a smile and a bow. A gift of a thousand pounds could not have been more welcome to her. An old man had also reached the carriage. He took the hand of the Liberator and with tears in his eyes exclaimed — 'I have come far to see you, Sir, and to touch this hand; now I am happy and return home rejoiced.' As the man retired O'Connell whispered aloud — 'What a nation!' His broad chest heaved. No doubt his benevolent heart answered to his whispering — 'They must be free.'"

After leaving Ireland, Father De Smet traveled through the principal cities of England, France, Italy,[1] Holland and Belgium, and embarked at Antwerp, December 12th, with four fathers, a lay brother and six sisters, together with a large amount of supplies for the missions. They sailed in the *Infatigable* around Cape Horn for the Columbia. Whether the vessel was chartered for the purpose of the missions does not appear, but in any case she sailed directly to Father De Smet's destination without other than necessary outfitting delays at any place. They were detained at Flushing near the mouth of the Scheld twenty-eight days by contrary winds and did not finally get away until January 9, 1844.

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[1] "In Rome, when presented to His Holiness Gregory XVI by the Father-General of the Society of Jesus, the Pope rose from his throne and embraced him. But the cordial greetings were not long an unmixed pleasure for the soul of the humble missionary, who became much alarmed on the discovery that they had resolved to make him a bishop. With the help of the Father-General, however, he succeeded in throwing the burden on the shoulders of the Very Rev. F. N. Blanchet, who, besides being in every way qualified for the Episcopal dignity, was his senior both in years and as a missionary in the Rocky Mountains."— *Palladino.*

The story of this voyage of seven months, as told by Father De Smet, is one of the most interesting on record. It deals with all the incidents of the journey, the varying moods of the weather, the crossing of the Equator with its time-honored fun and frolic, the meeting of vessels on the lonely ocean, the rise of the southern constellations into view and their disappearance again, and a great variety of other subjects which so long a voyage brings forth. To a man of Father De Smet's temperament everything had an interest and he was eminently qualified to derive the utmost pleasure possible from such a journey.

Soon after passing the Horn they encountered a succession of terrific storms which almost drove them upon the coast of Patagonia. It was a terrible time, but the danger was met with consummate skill by the crew and with calm resignation by the passengers. "A tempest is truly a sublime spectacle," says Father De Smet in his account of the storm, "but the description is infinitely more agreeable than the reality. If there had been less of the frightful about it, probably I should have enjoyed it more. Such was the roaring of the winds and waves that the captain's voice, even through the trumpet, could hardly be distinguished. The waves rose in pyramids around us, and masses of water, torn off by the fury of the winds, were hurled upon us in floods that filled the deck with foam. Never in any of my voyages had I seen such evidence of the might of wind and water, nor of the admirable manner in which a vessel resists the fury of the elements."

The *Infatigable* stopped for a considerable time at both Valparaiso in Chile and Callao in Peru, and Father De Smet visited the capitals of these two countries. They were full of interest to him and he devotes much interesting space to his impressions of them.[2] These breaks in the long journey were most welcome to the weary passengers, who spent all the time on land. On the 27th of May, 1844, they sailed from the harbor of Callao and were not to land again until at the end of their voyage. For a while the winds were favorable and the vessel was soon back on the north side of the Equator. Then they fell into a zone of calms which continued until both passengers and crew were well-nigh exhausted. Father De Smet thus refers to these miserable experiences: "Then an expression of discouragement and melancholy appears on the captain's face and on those of all the crew. It seems as if one were condemned to perish here. A blackened sea all around, a somber sky above, and clouds on the horizon, like impenetrable obstacles, changing form every instant and calling to mind all kinds of phantoms; while the ship, like a weak toy upon a sea in torment, swelling and sinking unceasingly, rocks and rocks until the head and stomach both turn."

Presently they came to regions of better winds and the good ship resumed her speed. It was high time, for her supply of provisions was getting low. Finally, on the 28th of July, amid general exclamations of joy, the longed-for coast of Oregon came into view where the great "River of the West" pours its tribute into the sea. But scarcely had the first outburst of joy passed when the ominous sight of the rolling breakers at the mouth of the river changed all to gloomy foreboding. They were face to face with one of the greatest of maritime dangers, the bar of the Columbia. They had heard of its terrors — what sailor had not?— but it required actual observation to show them in their true light. Here they were at the end of their voyage. For nearly seven months they had been upon the sea and had survived its calms and tempests. A sail of two hours would place them within the mouth of the river; but to get there they must brave the greatest peril of the entire voyage. It was a situation that caused the stoutest heart to sink.

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[2] See p. 420 *et seq.* of the *Letters.*

We cannot follow the good ship through all of the experiences of the next three days, which Father De Smet has given in such graphic detail. Suffice it to say that the crew misunderstood warning signals from the shore, sent a boat to sound the channel, received a favorable report, set out to cross the bar, fell into the wrong channel, were practically aground several times, but by the most extraordinary good fortune escaped disaster and made the passage in safety. Little wonder that such a providential escape, coming upon the Feast Day (July 31st), of the great founder of the Society of Jesus, should have been ascribed by his devoted followers to his watchful guardianship.

On the 2d of August Father De Smet started by canoe for Fort Vancouver to announce his arrival to Bishop Blanchet and Dr. McLoughlin. The bishop happened to be absent at the time in the Willamette valley, but was immediately sent for. After the first greetings and the delays incident upon unloading their goods from the vessel, Father De Smet and his companions, with Father Blanchet, started for the Willamette valley, where, according to the plan agreed upon with the Father General in Rome, a central mission was to be established. After some difficulty in selecting a site the work was begun. During its progress an alarming epidemic prevailed and Father De Smet was for a time dangerously ill; but nevertheless kept his hand on the wheel and guided the rising establishment through its initial stages.

With an ardent longing to get back among his Indians in the mountains, whom he had not seen for two years, Father De Smet left the Willamette on October 3d for the upper country. He first came among the Kalispels of the Bay, whom he had promised to give a mission two years before. They were accompanied by Father Adrian Hoeken. They were overjoyed at Father De Smet's return and conducted him to their camp amid volleys of musketry and every demonstration of rejoicing. Then began a general interchange of news, the Indians relating what had happened in the past two years, and Father De Smet relating his wondrous journeys by sea and land, through great cities and nations and over vast oceans. To the simple Indians he must indeed have seemed like an envoy from the Great Spirit himself.

Father De Smet now turned his attention to planting an establishment among the Kalispels of the Bay, this last word being then applied to a great bend in Clark's Fork of the Columbia river some forty miles above its mouth. To this reduction the name St. Ignatius was given. It was Father De Smet's intention to visit the Flathead mission that fall and as the season was far advanced it was necessary for him to set out at once. He stopped for a time at the new mission, the Sacred Heart, among the Cœur d'Alènes, and then continued his journey. It was the 19th of November and winter in the mountains was already so far advanced that he could not get through. After several attempts, he was compelled to return and he passed the winter among the Kalispels of the Bay.

Early in February, 1845, while the snow was yet deep on the ground, Father De Smet started for St. Mary's, thinking he could make the journey and return before the spring melting should come. In this he was successful, and he got back to the Bay just as the snow-melting had well begun. After helping start the new buildings for this establishment, he went to Fort Vancouver and the Willamette for further supplies. With eleven horses laden with implements and provisions he soon started back to the upper country, and on his way established two new stations — one at Kettle Falls and the other at Lake de Boey.

When the 31st of July, the Feast of St. Ignatius, came, and Father De Smet reviewed the past year, he could not but feel gratified at the progress that had been made. He says in one of his letters: "Last year the Feast of St. Ignatius proved for me a day of danger, trial and uneasiness. I love to recall it to my mind, for it terminated joyfully, and so gloriously that I know my companions can never forget it, and they will return lasting thanks to the Almighty for the display of his mercy. Without a chart or any knowledge of the mouth of the Columbia, we traversed, as if borne on angels' wings, the bar of this formidable river. This year I passed the Feast of St. Ignatius amidst many occupations, but they were of such a nature as to console the missionary's heart, and repay him a hundred fold for the trifling privations, pains and fatigues he endures."

The Blackfeet Indians, traditional enemies of the Flatheads and other tribes among which De Smet was operating, were at this time giving a great deal of trouble, and even menacing the continued existence of St. Mary's Mission. It seemed a necessary step to bring about some understanding with them. Father De Smet, in his capacity of spiritual envoy extraordinary, assumed, on more than one occasion, the power to make treaties of peace. With an admirable common sense he reasoned that peace could never be objectionable and no exceptions could be taken by the Government to his efforts to bring it about wherever it did not exist. Accordingly he now resolved to make a personal visit to the Blackfeet and endeavor to put some check upon their warlike operations. He traveled by the Canadian route which took him far to the north. It would have been much easier to reach the Blackfeet by going from the Flatheads direct to the Missouri river, and the only reason which suggests itself for his taking the course he did was to visit new tribes with a view of spreading his work as widely as possible. His mind was full of his vast design of building up in this country a mighty spiritual empire and he stopped at no hardships to carry out his scheme. He speaks of "taking spiritual possession of this land, which was now for the first time trodden by a minister of the Most High." It was undoubtedly this purpose that led him to take the long and circuitous route that he did.

Father De Smet was now again in his element — exploring regions new to him; jotting down the experiences of each day in order that he might send them forth to the world where they would bring new workers to his vineyard. One of his observations at this time has become historical. He had already become convinced of the presence of gold and silver in these mountains; but knowing what its discovery by the whites would mean to the Indians, he had kept his knowledge to himself. He thus refers to the matter in a letter written on this journey: "Poor unfortunate Indians! They trample on treasures unconscious of their worth, and content themselves with the fishery and chase. When these resources fail, they subsist upon roots and herbs; whilst they eye, with tranquil surprise, the white man examining the shining pebbles of their territory. Ah! they would tremble indeed could they learn the history of those numerous and ill-fated tribes that have been swept from their land, to make place for Christians who have made the poor Indians the victims of their rapacity."

His route, which is given in detail in the published itinerary of his travels, was, in general terms, up the Kootenai river to the mouth of the Vermillion river; thence across the Divide to the sources of the Saskatchewan, and thence to the Rocky Mountain House, a Hudson Bay trading post on the north fork of that stream. The course of this journey had taken him momentarily across to the lakes at the source of the Columbia. Here occurred one of those interesting *rencontres* which were so frequent in his experience. He found there a Canadian family, named Morigeau, sole occupants of this empire of rugged grandeur. Morigeau had long been without a priest and in the meanwhile a numerous family had grown up. Upon hearing that Father De Smet was coming his way he hastened home to make ready for the baptism of his wife and children. When the priest arrived, "the august sacrifice of the mass was offered and Morigeau devoutly approached the holy table. At the foot of the humble altar he received the nuptial benediction; and the mother, surrounded by her children and six little Indians, was regenerated in the holy waters of baptism."

The presence of this Canadian family in such a place, cut off from all the world, appealed to the romantic side of Father De Smet's nature and he thus unburdened himself in their regard: "The Canadian! Into what part of the desert has he not penetrated? The monarch who rules at the source of the Columbia is an honest emigrant from St. Martin in the district of Montreal, who has resided for twenty-six years in this wilderness. The skins of the rein and moose deer are the materials of which his portable palace is composed; and to use his own expressions, he 'embarks' on horseback with his wife and seven children, and 'lands' wherever he pleases. Here no one disputes his right, and Polk and Peel, who are now contending for the possession of his dominions, are as unknown to him as the two greatest powers of the moon. His sceptre is a beaver trap, his law a carbine; and with the one on his back, the other on his arm, he reviews his numerous furry subjects — the beaver, otter, muskrat, marten, fox, bear, wolf, sheep and white goat of the mountains, * * * some of which respect his sceptre and others submit to his law. He exacts and receives from them the tribute of flesh and skins. Encircled by so much grandeur, undisturbed proprietor of all these skyward palaces and strongholds, the very last refuge which Nature has reared to preserve alive liberty on earth — solitary lord of these majestic mountains that elevate their icy summits to the clouds,— Morigeau (our Canadian) does not forget his duty as a Christian. Each day, morning and evening, he may be seen devoutly reciting his prayers in the midst of his little family."

From Rocky Mountain House Father De Smet made a long excursion to the south in search of the Blackfeet; but winter had come, the snow obliterated the trail of the Indians, and after intense suffering he returned to Rocky Mountain House and went thence to Fort Augustus in latitude 53° 30′ north, where he arrived on the last day of the year 1845.

He spent the winter at Fort Augustus, making one trip to St. Anne Mission in that vicinity. As soon as the approach of spring held out a prospect of getting back across the mountains, he left for Fort Assiniboin on the Athabasca river, traveling on a sled drawn by four dogs. He left Fort Assiniboin on the 12th of March, 1846, and went a long step farther to Fort Jasper, traveling on the ice of the river. Here he remained until the 25th of April and then set out on the hazardous journey across the mountains. With numerous delays here and there, owing to the early season, the little party made their way across the pass to the point called Boat Encampment where the Canoe river enters the Columbia. This was undoubtedly the severest test of his physical powers to which Father De Smet was ever subjected. A large part of the way he had to wade the icy waters of the streams. He lost the nails of his toes and was so much affected otherwise that he declares he would surely have succumbed but for the aid of a small band of Indians whom they encountered. It had been the opinion of the people at Fort Augustus that Father De Smet's weight was too great to permit him to make the journey, much of which would have to be upon snowshoes. But with quick resolution he set out to reduce his flesh by a rigorous fast of thirty days and was measurably successful. After he started, the scant supply of provisions gave him no opportunity to regain his weight.

The long journey that remained was made in comparative ease. He was back at Fort Colville near the end of May and went thence to Fort Vancouver and the Willamette.

The large extent of the work now established made it necessary that additional aid be sought from the States or from Europe and it was unanimously the opinion of the missionaries that Father De Smet should go. Outfitting himself with supplies for the stations in the upper country, he set out from Fort Vancouver to visit them and then to go on to the States. He arrived at St. Mary's Mission about August 10th, and left there on the 16th. As his mission of the previous winter had miscarried, so far as making peace with the Blackfeet was concerned, he resolved to try to accomplish that desirable object on his way home.

It happened that a considerable body of the Flatheads with thirty lodges of Nez Percés and, strange to say, a few lodges of Blackfeet, were at this time in the Yellowstone valley on the borders of the Crow country. The Crows were at war with both the Blackfeet and Nez Percés, and perceiving their own strength to be greater than that of the united camp, were eager to attack it. At the urgent interposition of the Flatheads they deferred action for a time. Father De Smet, when he discovered that there were both Nez Percés and Blackfeet with the Flatheads, foresaw what would probably happen should they meet the Crows, and accordingly dispatched his interpreters, Gabriel and Charles, at their utmost speed to announce his approach. This had some effect, and the Crow chiefs made a strong effort to repress the turbulent spirit of their camp. But the strain was too great to be resisted and on the following day they attacked the allied camp with great impetuosity. Anticipating the attack, the allies had fortified themselves and were able to repulse it without loss. At the opportune moment, when their enemy was in disorder, they delivered a counter-charge which completely routed them. Fourteen of their warriors were slain while the allied camp lost but one man — a Nez Percé. The Crows fled entirely out of reach and Father De Smet was unable to communicate with them, though he ardently desired to do so and heal the unfortunate rupture that had taken place.

The valiant conduct of the Flatheads made a deep impression upon the Blackfeet and paved the way for the desired peace between the two tribes. "Shortly after my arrival," says Father De Smet, "the Blackfeet came in a body to my lodge, to express in a manner truly eloquent their admiration of the Flatheads, with whom in future they desired to live on terms of the closest friendship. 'To their prayers,' said they, 'must this extraordinary victory be attributed. While the battle lasted, we saw their old men, their women and children, on their knees imploring the aid of heaven. The Flatheads did not lose a single man; one only fell, a young Nez Percé, and another was mortally wounded. But the Nez Percés did not pray. We prayed morning and evening with the Flatheads, and heard the instructions of the chiefs.' Then they begged of me in their own affecting way to take pity on them and be charitable to them. They now determined to hear the words of the Great Manitou of the whites."

The allied camp then set out in a northwesterly direction to the buffalo country in the Judith Basin and thence to Fort Lewis which was later named Fort Benton. The incidents of this trip, the jealousies of the tribes, the constant exercise of diplomacy to meet their various whims, the growing admiration of the Blackfeet for the black-gown and his religion, and finally a peace between these Indians and the Flatheads, occupy many pages in Father De Smet's letters. His plan was successful and paved the way to founding a mission among this always dreaded tribe. With this result accomplished, it was decided that Father Point should remain with the tribe and himself go on to St. Louis.

Father De Smet left Fort Lewis September 28th, traveling by skiff on the long journey of 2,200 miles. Naturally it was full of interesting incident as they passed the various posts and Indian tribes along the way and these are recorded in great detail in the letters. We shall pass them by here and note only one of unusual character, the meeting with the Mormons at Council Bluffs. Father De Smet saw much of these people. He naturally shared the popular prejudice against what seemed a spurious religion, but he sympathized with them in the persecutions which had virtually exiled them from the United States. He became well acquainted with Young and it is possible that the information he gave him may have influenced that leader in choosing Salt Lake Valley as the future home of his people. The following reference from his letter will be of interest:

"In the fall of 1846, as I drew near to the frontier of the State of Missouri, I found the advance guard of the Mormons, numbering about 10,000, camped in the territory of the Omahas, not far from the old Council Bluffs. They had just been driven out for the second time from a state of the Union. They had resolved to winter on the threshold of the great desert, and then to move onward into it to put distance between themselves and their persecutors, without even knowing at that time the goal of their long wanderings, nor the spot where they should once more build for themselves permanent dwellings. They asked me a thousand questions about the regions I had explored and the spot which I have just described to you [the basin of Great Salt Lake] pleased them greatly from the account I gave them of it. Was that what determined them? I would not dare to assert it. They are there. In the last three years Utah has changed its aspect, and from a desert has become a flourishing territory which will soon become one of the states of the Union."

Father De Smet reached the University of St. Louis December 10, 1846, three years and six months after his departure in the opposite direction.

It is worth while to consider here what Father De Smet had accomplished in the past seven years. His prodigious labors, travels, hardships and perils must be placed in the very first rank of similar exploits. In these seven years he had traveled, by the slow methods of the time, a distance equal to more than twice the circumference of the earth. He had traveled in almost every clime and by every sort of conveyance. From the burning summer of the Equator he had passed to the frozen winters of 54° 30′ north. He had traveled by sailing vessel, by river barge and by canoe; by dog sled and snow shoe; on horseback and in wagon; and many a long mile on foot. He had endured hardships that seem to us almost impossible and which undoubtedly were the foundation of the ills he later suffered. It was to the period of 1844–6 that he referred in a letter to a fellow missionary who was complaining of the hardship of his lot: "I have been for years a wanderer in the desert. I was three years without receiving a letter from any quarter. I was two years in the mountains, without tasting bread, salt, coffee, tea, sugar. I was for years without a roof, without a bed. I have been six months without a shirt on my back, and often have I passed whole days and nights without a morsel of anything to eat."

The results of his labors, from a missionary point of view, were highly successful. The whole Columbia valley had been dotted with infant establishments, some of which had taken on the promise of permanent growth. He had indeed laid the foundation well for a spiritual empire throughout that region, and but for the approach of emigration his plans would have brought forth the full fruition that he expected.

But most important of all, from a public point of view, was the fact that he had become a great power among the Indian tribes. All now knew him, many personally, the rest by reputation. He was the one white man in whom they had implicit faith. The Government was beginning to look to him for assistance. The Mormon, the Forty-niner, the Oregon emigrant came to him for information and advice. His writings were already known on two continents and his name was a familiar one, at least in the religious world.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GREAT COUNCIL OF 1851.

Trials and discouragements — Restlessness of the Plains tribes — Government decides to hold council — De Smet asked to go — Voyage of the *St. Ange* — Cholera on board — Death of Father Hoeken — Arrival at Fort Union — Departure on overland journey to Fort Laramie — Fort Alexander — Lake De Smet — The Oregon trail — Arrival at the council ground — Proceedings of the council — Return to St. Louis.

IT is a fact not easily explained that Father De Smet never again returned to his great field of missionary work, nor ever revisited those regions except twice, and both times upon other business. And yet we have his repeated statements that it was the cherished desire of his heart to spend the remainder of his days among his dear Indians, and he undoubtedly sought, as much as he could consistently with his vows, to bring about such a result. "I am like a soldier," he wrote to a friend. "When I receive orders I march whither I am sent. Yet, like a soldier, I may have my preferences, and I need not tell you that these are decidedly for the Indian country." And again: "I regret very much the plains, the Indians and the wilderness with all their privations, miseries and dangers. They were treats indeed compared with the monotony with which I am surrounded." Again, in a very feeling letter to the Father General, he implores the privilege of being sent away to some obscure mission there to spend the remainder of his days.

The "monotony" which Father De Smet complains of undoubtedly relates to the character of the duties with which he was charged during the greater part of his life as an ordained priest. He occupied almost continuously the position of procurator of the Province, an office which related exclusively to the financial affairs of the Church. His great ability in securing contributions and in managing the always difficult task of their distribution made him admirably fitted for this work. But it was personally distasteful to him. "I hold the general purse," he once wrote, "and have to supply all needs; and this purse is never full; the greater part of the time it is flat; while I receive demands from all sides." In another letter to a distant friend he wrote: "Probably we shall never again see each other on this side of the grave. I hope we shall meet in heaven where all ciphering, quibbling and account-making are at an end."

But the principal reason why Father De Smet was not permitted personally to conduct his missions was a growing feeling in Rome that he was planning on too large a scale; that the ends would not justify the means. It had been reported to the Father General by other parties, that the field of work was not at all what had been represented, and that De Smet's descriptions were poetical flights of the imagination and not true pictures of the situation.[1] Father De Smet was deeply hurt at these accusations but promptly and vigorously defended himself, to the apparent satisfaction of the Father General; for soon after sending his reply to the charges against him he speaks with great satisfaction of the certain prospect before him of spending the rest of his life among the Indians.

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[1] "When you were my Superior, you frequently corrected me for being too easily dejected when things were said against me, to which I must plead guilty. Something of the kind has occurred again, and from headquarters, which has brought me low indeed — the more so as I have the full conviction in my heart that the charges against me are untrue, false and unjust, and bring along great evil in their train — the neglect, in a great measure, of the Indians, for whom I would gladly have sacrificed the remainder of my days. I stand accused of the following: 1st. That my letters have done a great deal of harm in America; 2d. That they are only imagination and poetry, false and untrue; 3d. That I have lost the mission by over-liberality to the Indians, and by promises to them which the fathers have been unable to fulfill."

Letter to Bishop Van de Velde, Baltimore.

Immediately after his return to St. Louis in 1846, he went to New Orleans, returning in January, 1847, and later in the year made a journey to Europe returning to America in midsummer, 1848. He was then sent on an expedition to the Sioux country and returned to St. Louis late in December. The years 1849 and 1850 were spent in St. Louis except for several journeys in the capacity of Socius with the Father Provincial to Catholic institutions in various parts of the country.

Here again we come upon an obscure spot in Father De Smet's life. It is apparent that he now saw before him the long-wished-for opportunity of spending the rest of his life among the Indians. He repeatedly refers to this fact in his letters, but always without explanation. Just before leaving St. Louis on the expedition of 1851, which we shall next relate, he wrote the words already quoted: "Probably we shall never again see each other on this side of the grave." In another letter written at the same time he says that he expects never to return. Upon what he based these expectations or what brought about their prompt non-fulfillment, we do not know, except that upon the very eve of departure he received a letter from the Father General disapproving his plan of going among the Indians. Preparations were, however, too far advanced to be countermanded, and his superiors in St. Louis decided that he should at least attend the Indian council which the Government had decided to hold that summer and at which Father De Smet had promised to assist.

The great rush of emigrants to Oregon which began in the early Forties and kept on increasing year after year; and the immeasurable tide that swept over the plains as a result of the discovery of gold in California, wrought a profound change of conditions in the western country. The Indian saw his once undisputed domain slipping steadily from his grasp. He became restless and discontented. It was apparent that trouble might arise at any time and it became necessary to take some measures to avoid it. To that end it was proposed, largely at the instance of D. D. Mitchell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis, to hold a general council of all the Western tribes east of the Rocky Mountains and come to some understanding in view of the changed conditions. This plan was approved by the Government and the year 1851 was fixed upon. Colonel Mitchell, to whom the actual work of the council was entrusted, earnestly besought the aid of Father De Smet, and his superiors consented that he should go. Thus began the long and valuable service which Father De Smet, in the capacity of pacificator, rendered the Government of the United States during the remaining years of his life.

It was in connection with this expedition that Father De Smet, in the letters quoted, speaks of never returning again. It was his plan, after attending the council, to go on to the missions and remain there the rest of his life. With him on this expedition was Father Christian Hoeken, one of the most efficient of the early missionaries. They left St. Louis June 7, 1851, on one of the finest boats ever on the river, the *St. Ange,* commanded by the distinguished pilot, Father De Smet's fast friend, Captain Joseph La Barge. Disaster attended the first part of the voyage. Cholera had been prevalent throughout the country for several years and was particularly bad this year. The spring floods of the Missouri had been high, the bottoms much overflowed, and malarial conditions were bad. Three days after leaving port the cholera broke out on board and raged with great fatality for the next ten days. In the meanwhile Father De Smet was seized with a malarial fever which itself came near proving fatal. He had besought Father Hoeken to hear his confession, when that priest was suddenly seized with the cholera. Father De Smet, barely able to drag himself to the bedside of his companion, administered the last sacraments and the good father passed away on the 19th of June. It was a great blow to Father De Smet, for Father Hoeken was one of his most cherished friends.

As soon as the boat had gotten above the flooded district and into a dryer atmosphere it was unloaded and thoroughly aired and the rest of the voyage passed off without further sickness.

As the boat threaded its way up the winding Missouri, amid scenes of rural beauty and the luxuriance of a fertile country, Father De Smet could not but ponder upon the changes which were on the eve of taking place. He was on his way even then to assist at a council which was to offer some temporary relief to an ever troublesome problem. In his narrative of this journey he writes: "Will not the President of the Republic, like some of his predecessors, pluck some plumes from the Indian eagle, once the emblem of their greatness and power, to place them among the trophies of his administration? In the limits which I trace he will find an extent of country vast enough to be represented by three or four stars more of the first magnitude, which will enhance the lustre of the galaxy in the flag of the Union. This great territory will hold an immense population, destined to form several great and flourishing States.

"But then, what will become of the Indians, who have already come from afar to abide in this land? What will become of the aborigines, who have possessed it from time immemorial? This is indeed a thorny question, awakening gloomy ideas in the observer's mind, if he has followed the encroaching policy of the United States in regard to the Indian. We may hope that the sad remnant of these numerous nations who once covered America, now reduced to earn their bread in the sweat of their brow (for they can no longer subsist by hunting), will find an asylum, a permanent abode, and will be incorporated, with the rights of citizens, into the Union."

The *St. Ange* arrived at Fort Union on the 14th of July, and preparations were begun for the journey overland to Fort Laramie, where the great council was to be held. It was a common experience in Father De Smet's career that important events in his work occurred on the 31st of July, the feast day of the founder of the Society. So now the considerable party of Indians and white men started on their long and important journey upon that day. There were representatives from the Assiniboins, Minnetarees and Crows and the party consisted in all of thirty-two men. Their route took them across the desolate waste west of the Yellowstone river in eastern Montana to Fort Alexander, which Father De Smet had visited twice or three times before. Thence they made their way southwardly, along the eastern base of the Bighorn mountains to the Platte river near the present town of Casper, Wyoming. At this point they came upon the Oregon Trail, which was then the route of the vast emigration that was on its way to California and Oregon. It was an impressive sight, even to white men, and as to the Indians, let Father De Smet tell of its effect upon them:

"Our Indian companions, who had never seen but the narrow hunting-paths, by which they transport themselves and their lodges, were filled with admiration on seeing this noble highway, which is as smooth as a barn-floor swept by the winds, and not a blade of grass can shoot up on it on account of the continual passing. They conceived a high idea of the countless White Nation, as they express it. They fancied that all had gone over that road, and that an immense void must exist in the land of the rising sun. Their countenances testified evident incredulity when I told them that their exit was in nowise perceived in the lands of the whites. They styled the route the great medicine road of the whites. * * * They visited and examined in detail all the forsaken camping-grounds on the way; they brought a great variety of objects to me to have their use and signification explained; they filled their pouches with knives, forks, spoons, basins, coffee-pots and other cooking articles, axes, hammers, etc. With the bits of earthenware which bore any figure or inscription, they fabricated some ornament for their necks and ears. How wonderful will be the accounts given of the great medicine road by our unsophisticated Indians when they go back to their villages and sit in the midst of an admiring circle of relatives."

This great California movement was a source of deep interest to Father De Smet. When in St. Louis not a day passed, he tells us, that some one did not come to ask his advice about going thither. He generally discouraged them, or at least advised extreme deliberation in undertaking such a step. He had witnessed so much suffering and disappointment in these migrations that he could not see an intending emigrant depart without wishing him to give it up. And now along the great Trail he saw for himself the true meaning of such a journey, in the relics cast away by the emigrants, in the graves of those who had perished by the way, and in many returning parties who had found their hopes of fortune to be only barren dreams.

After striking the Oregon Trail the party marched eastward to Fort Laramie, where they found that the council was to be held in the valley of Horse Creek still thirty miles farther on. The next day this additional journey was made and the whole party, with the several representatives of the Government and some ten thousand Indians, were gathered together in the plain. The council with its attendant incidents lasted from the 12th to the 23d of September, and was terminated to the satisfaction of all concerned. Great harmony prevailed. All features of the troublesome situation were discussed and earnest effort was made to reach some good result. The principal men among the whites were D. D. Mitchell, Robert Campbell, Thomas Fitzpatrick and Father De Smet, although the latter had no official powers. The treaties formed with the various tribes recognized the right of the whites to cross their lands with roads, etc.; recompensed the Indians for losses sustained, and provided payments for losses in the future. On the 20th of September an immense quantity of goods arrived for distribution as presents to the Indians and gave them great satisfaction.

Father De Smet attended the council from beginning to end. He used his great influence with the tribes to promote a satisfactory understanding and he labored incessantly for their spiritual and temporal welfare. His dignified and unselfish bearing won their hearts and his presence was a power among them.

The council broke up September 24th and the members of the commission started for the east. Father De Smet turned off from the main road on his way and visited the Mission of St. Mary's, in Kansas. He reached St. Louis on the 21st of October.

Upon his return home he found that his dear friend, Father Provincial Elet, had died. These two losses, Father Hoeken and Father Elet, were a great sorrow to him and, added to the failure of his plan of going among the Indians, made the year 1851 one of gloom to the good missionary. Only a year later we find him ready to return to his native land to remain there, for it doubtless seemed to him that his long-cherished hopes were doomed to disappointment. There seems to have been some plan on foot to this end emanating from his superiors. He thus refers to it: "In so far as this plan regards me, I will speak openly to you. I have nothing whatever to do with their choice, nor with the adoption of the plan. I affirm, nevertheless, that I am ready to execute in all things the will of my superiors. I will even admit to you, that in my secret soul, and after mature reflection and much prayer, I desire that the plan should be accomplished, and for the sole reason that I would be glad to be able to spend the few years that remain to me, should the Lord grant me any, in the strict observance and practice of all our holy rules and in perfect submission to the orders of my superiors. I feel the need of it, after having passed so many years in these remote American missions."

But this plan, like the other, was never realized and Father De Smet continued to labor in his accustomed field. The subsequent events of his life show that, whatever his own regrets or disappointments, his adopted country was the gainer by the action of his superiors.

CHAPTER VII.

THE UTAH AND OREGON EXPEDITIONS.

Visit to Europe in 1853 — Shipwreck of the *Humboldt* — Voyage to Europe in 1856 — The Mormon rebellion — Military expedition under Harney — De Smet accompanies as chaplain — Peace with the Mormons — Expedition interrupted — Yakima war in Oregon — Harney sent thither — De Smet goes with him — Voyage via Panama — Pacification of the Oregon Indians — Departure for home — Arrival at Fort Benton — Voyage by skiff to Omaha — Thence by steamer to St. Louis.

THE year 1852 was spent by Father De Smet in his regular duties as procurator of the Province. In the spring of 1853 he started on another trip to Europe accompanied by the Right Reverend Bishop Miege, Vicar Apostolic of the Indian Territory east of the Rocky Mountains. While passing through Washington they were presented to President Pierce by Colonel Thos. H. Benton and Father De Smet was made bearer of dispatches to several European powers. They sailed May 9th on the steamer *Fulton* and crossed in eleven days — a great contrast with the voyage of 1821, when it took forty days under sail to bring De Smet to America.

Father De Smet accompanied Bishop Miege only as far as Paris. While there an incident occurred that shows the humorous nature of the great missionary and also his fertility of resources in popularizing his work in America. He delivered an address upon his missions to the student fathers at the Sorbonne, and to make it more effective, decked out one of them in Indian paraphernalia that he had brought with him.

Father De Smet embarked on his return to America November 23d of the same year on the steamer *Humboldt*. The voyage was rough and slow and the steamer had to put into

Halifax for coal. Through the incompetence of the pilot the vessel was wrecked and lost but the crew and passengers were saved. After a short delay the passengers were taken on the steamer *Niagara* and carried to Boston. Father De Smet was back in St. Louis the day after Christmas.

The years 1854-5 and most of 1856 were spent in St. Louis, except for the journeys made as Socius with the Father Provincial to the various Catholic establishments in the Mississippi valley. In the year 1855 Father De Smet took the last important vows pertaining to membership of the Society of Jesus and one which is never permitted to members before they reach the age of forty-five. Father De Smet thus refers to this event: "On Assumption Day I took my last vows. Remember me in your holy sacrifices and prayers that I may remain faithful to my holy engagements."

In September, 1856, Father De Smet sailed again by the steamer *Fulton* for Europe, and after an extensive tour of the cities of Europe, re-embarked in April, 1857, on the *Leopold* for New York. This visit to Europe was a most unwelcome one to the much traveled priest. "The journey comes wonderfully hard on me on the present occasion," he writes. "I find consolation only that it is undertaken by obedience." Reluctant as he was to go, he was even more rejoiced to get back. "I embraced the floor of my room on entering it," he wrote, "and from my inmost heart thanked the Lord."

In December, 1857, Father Duerinck was drowned near Independence, Mo. He was descending the Missouri in an open boat with six men. The boat was wrecked on a snag. Duerinck was a close friend of Father De Smet, his aunt having been the first wife of De Smet's father. The occurrence completely prostrated Father De Smet.

Father De Smet had not at this time been to the Indian country for six years; but in 1858 a call came from quite an unexpected quarter. The Mormon Rebellion of

1857–8 was in progress. As is well known, the Mormons had migrated to the Salt Lake valley when that country was still a possession of Mexico. But the war with Mexico transferred it to the United States, and as it increased in population the responsibilities of territorial government followed. Brigham Young and his people opposed all Federal interference; indeed the Government was not at first disposed to trouble them; and to make such interference as was necessary as light as possible, Brigham Young was himself made first governor of the territory. The movement of people along the California trail had brought to the States the first real knowledge of the condition of things in Utah, and a feeling of prejudice against the Mormons gradually assumed formidable proportions. In 1857 the incoming administration at Washington appointed a new governor, Alfred Cummings, to succeed Young. The ex-governor and his people rebelled and decided that the change should not take place; and to make good their threat they prepared for active resistance.

It therefore became necessary to send a military force to protect the governor and other new officers in the discharge of their duties, and Albert Sidney Johnston was sent in command of the expedition. The Mormons at first got the better of the federal troops; destroyed large quantities of their supplies, and so crippled the usefulness of Fort Bridger as a base that the expedition was threatened with starvation when the winter of 1857–8 approached. Thereupon the Government assumed both a commanding and conciliatory tone. It organized a new military expedition, and it sent commissioners offering amnesty to such of the Mormons as ceased their resistance. These measures resulted in peace before the second military expedition reached the territory. General Johnston and Governor Cummings entered the Mormon capital in June and the authority of the governor was recognized by the people. The second military expedition was stopped at the ford of the South Platte river and turned back.

The commander of this second expedition was General William S. Harney. He asked to have Father De Smet accompany the expedition as chaplain and the Government approved his request. The Church authorities at St. Louis thought well of the project and so Father De Smet accepted the place at $1,200 per year and his expenses.[1] His letters inform us that he was contemplating a trip among the Missouri and Flathead Indians this year, and thought he could combine it with his official duties.

Father De Smet left St. Louis May 20, 1858, to join the command at Fort Leavenworth. It was seven years since he had crossed the plains and the progress which settlement had made in the meantime impressed him deeply. "No further back," he writes, "than 1851, at the time of my return from the great council held on the borders of the Platte, the plains of Kansas were almost entirely without inhabitants, containing only a few scattered villages of Indians, living for the most part by the chase, by fishing and on wild fruits and roots. But eight years have made an entire change: many towns and villages have sprung up, as it were, by enchantment; forges and mills of every kind are already numerous; extensive and beautiful farms have been established in all directions with extraordinary rapidity and industry."

Father De Smet records some interesting facts regarding the expedition. The magnitude of the supply trains excited his astonishment, as some of their idiosyncrasies provoked his laughter. "The most remarkable thing that I met * * * ," he says, "were the long wagon trains engaged in transporting to Utah provisions and stores of war. If the journals of the day may be believed, these cost the Government fifteen millions. Each train consisted of twenty-six wagons, each wagon drawn by six yoke of oxen, and containing near five thousand pounds.

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[1] For a full statement of his account, see page 775.

The Quartermaster-General made the calculation and told me that the whole train would make a line of about fifty miles. We passed every day some wagons of this immense train. Each wagon is marked with a name, as in the case of ships, and these names serve to furnish amusement to the passer-by, the caprices of the captains in this respect having imposed upon the wagons such names as the *Constitution*, the *President*, the *Great Republic*, the *King of Bavaria*, *Lola Montes*, *Louis Napoleon*, *Dan O'Connell*, *Old Kentuck*, etc., etc. These names were daubed in great letters on each side of the carriage. On the plains, the wagoner assumes the style of 'captain,' being placed in command of his wagon and twelve oxen. The master-wagoner is admiral of this little land-fleet; he has control of twenty-six captains and 312 oxen. At a distance, the white awnings of the wagons have the effect of a fleet of vessels with all canvas spread."

The expedition made its way safely and prosperously as far as the ford of the South Platte, when its further progress was stopped by the events already related. Father De Smet returned to Leavenworth with General Harney and then went on to St. Louis with the intention of resigning his commission; but his plan was frustrated by other events occurring in the far distant Oregon which was the familiar field of his labors in years gone by. Following is his own account of the event that changed his plan: "Upon my arrival in St. Louis in the early part of September, 1858, I tendered to the Secretary of War my resignation of the post of Chaplain to the Army of Utah. It was not, however, accepted, because of fresh difficulties that had arisen with the Indian tribes west of the Rocky Mountains. The papers announced that a powerful coalition of Indians had been formed, and that Colonel Steptoe had been attacked, and two officers, a sergeant and several soldiers of his company killed in the first engagement. A general rising was feared of all the tribes in that section — the Palooses, Yakimas, Skoyelpi, Okinagans, Spokans, Cœur d'Alénes, Kalispels, Kootenais and Flatheads. All these Indians, hitherto quiet and peaceable (especially the four tribes last named) had of late become more or less disturbed and irritated, chiefly through the incursions of white emigrants into the Indian lands on the southwest of the territories of Oregon and Washington, where, without the least ceremony and without any preliminary arrangement or agreement, they had taken possession of the most fertile lands and the most advantageous sites.

"The mountain Indians, especially, had become alarmed and had resolved to oppose the entry of the whites and their further advance into the land. The Indian force that was on foot consisted of 800 to 1,000 warriors. They had just won a victory: the hasty retreat of the brave Colonel Steptoe, who was hardly expecting an attack from the savages and had only 120 soldiers, appeared to them a flight. He had even abandoned to them all his train and provisions. Swollen with pride and presumption, the Indians thenceforth believed themselves invincible and capable of resisting and withstanding the whole United States Army. Accordingly they issued their defiance of the whites. The Government at any rate thought their opposition quite a serious matter, and decided to send out General Harney, who had covered himself with laurels on various occasions in Indian warfare in Florida, Texas, Mexico and the plains of the Missouri.

"I was once more invited by the Secretary of War, at General Harney's special request, to accompany him in his distant expedition. With the approval of my superiors, I consented to keep my post of army chaplain, with the hope especially that I might be able to be of some use to the mountain tribes of Indians, and be among my brethren in the difficulties which the war would bring upon them."[2]

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[2] This outbreak is what is known in Oregon history as the Yakima War. It was induced, like nearly all our Indian wars, by the encroachment of white settlers on the Indian lands.

Father De Smet went to Oregon by way of Panama, sailing from New York September 20, 1858. He crossed the Isthmus on the 29th, stopped at San Francisco October 16th, and arrived at Vancouver October 28th. As in the case of the Utah expedition, the actual campaign was over before General Harney arrived on the ground. "The task, however, remained," says De Smet, "of removing the prejudices of the Indians, soothing their inquietude and alarm, and correcting, or rather refuting, the false rumors that are generally spread about after a war, and which otherwise might be the cause of its renewal."

For the accomplishment of a task like this, there was no other individual so well equipped as Father De Smet. It was decided that he should visit the upper tribes among whom his name was held in affectionate reverence, and use his efforts toward bringing about a general pacification. He left Fort Vancouver the next day after his arrival. He passed the winter at the Sacred Heart Mission among the Cœur d'Alènes and on the 18th of February, 1859, set out for the Flathead country. He visited the site of the abandoned mission in the Bitter Root valley, the scene of his first labors, and also the new mission of St. Ignatius in its beautiful and permanent home in Mission valley near the Great Flathead lake.

On the 16th of April, pursuant to orders from General Harney, he left St. Ignatius with the chiefs of the various mountain tribes, to take them to Fort Vancouver, where they could confer with the Government officers. They reached their destination on the 18th of May and the council took place on the following day. The result of the interview was all that had been desired. The Indians were then given about three weeks to visit the interesting points in the territory in the hope that an acquaintance with the number and power of the whites would be a wholesome restraint upon further outbreaks. This affair wound up in a manner so thoroughly characteristic of the Indian nature, that we give an account of it as told by Father De Smet:

"The visit which appeared the most to interest the chiefs was that which they made to the prison at Portland and its wretched inmates, whom they found chained within its cells. They were particularly interested in the causes, motives, and duration of their imprisonments. Chief Alexander kept it in his mind. Immediately on his return to his camp at St. Ignatius Mission, he assembled his people, and related to them all the wonders of the whites, and especially the history of the prison. 'We,' said he, 'have neither chains nor prisons; and for want of them, no doubt, a great number of us are wicked and have deaf ears. As chief, I am determined to do my duty; I shall take a whip to punish the wicked; let all those who have been guilty of any misdemeanor present themselves; I am ready.' The known guilty parties were called upon by name, many presented themselves of their own accord, and all received a proportionate correction. The whole affair terminated in a general rejoicing and feast."

Feeling that he could be of no further service on the expedition, the objects of which were now accomplished, Father De Smet asked permission to return to the States by way of the mountain missions and the Missouri river. The official correspondence which is given in the *Letters,* evinces the most affectionate esteem on the part of the military authorities for Father De Smet personally, and a high estimation of his official services. It is particularly noteworthy that Captain Alfred Pleasanton, who later won for himself such an eminent place in the history of his country, formed the most tender attachment for the venerable missionary and a profound admiration for his teaching.

Father De Smet left Fort Vancouver on the 15th of June, halted three days at the Sacred Heart Mission, and arrived at St. Ignatius on the 16th of July. He left this mission a week later by way of the Mullan road and reached Fort Benton on the Missouri on the 29th, visiting the Great Falls on the way. The last time he had been at Benton was in 1846, while the post still bore the name of Fort Lewis. It had been his intention on leaving General Harney to travel all the way to St. Louis on horseback, but his animals gave out and he decided to go on by skiff. After full conferences with the resident missionaries, he left the fort August 5th with a skiff and oarsman furnished him by the fur company. He made the trip in entire safety to Omaha, where he found a steamer, and in that way made the rest of the journey to St. Louis, arriving there September 23d.

It is not an easy thing in this day to appreciate what a journey like that meant — traveling day after day in a frail skiff on the waters of a turbulent and treacherous stream, amid scenes of utter wildness, without the sight of a white man's house except occasional trading posts, and all the way in a land of savage tribes. Father De Smet has left a record of this journey which is worth reading. He says of the manner in which they lived: "During this long trip on the river we passed the nights in the open air, or under a little tent, often on sandbars to avoid the troublesome mosquitoes, or on the skirts of a plain, or in an untrodden forest. We often heard the howlings of the wolves, and the grunting of the grizzly bear disturbed our sleep, but without alarming us. In the desert one perceives that God has implanted in the breast of these wild beasts the fear of man. In the desert also we are enabled in a particular way to admire and to thank the divine providence which watches with so much solicitude over his children. There is admirably verified the text of St. Matthew: 'Consider the birds of the air, they sow not, but your Heavenly Father feeds them; are ye not of much more value than they?'[8] During the whole route, our wants were constantly supplied; yes, we lived in the midst of the greatest abundance. The rivers furnished us excellent fish, water-fowl, ducks, geese and swans; the forest and plains gave us fruits and roots. We never wanted for game; we found everywhere either immense herds of buffalo, of deer, antelope, mountain sheep and bighorn, or pheasants, wild turkeys and partridges."

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[8] This and other scriptural quotations given by Father De Smet are not from the King James version.

Some idea of the strenuous zeal of the good missionary in carrying on the work of his calling may be inferred from the fact that on this journey he baptized about 900 Indian children. Along the Missouri he met many tribes, always stopping a day or two to give them religious instruction. They invariably showed him the greatest respect and affection and listened to his words with the utmost attention.

CHAPTER VIII.

JOURNEYINGS AT HOME AND ABROAD.

1860-1866.

Visits Europe in 1860 — Return, 1861 — Outbreak of the Rebellion — Business journeys to Washington — Voyage to Fort Benton in 1862 — The Sioux outbreak — Minnesota massacre — Campaigns of Sibley and Sully — Voyage to Fort Benton, 1863 — Stopped by low water at Milk River — Rest of journey by land — Danger of return by river — Decides to return via Panama — Incidents of journey — The situation in the Sioux country — Peace mission to Sioux in 1864 — Unsuccessful and why — Visits Europe — Voyage to Fort Benton in 1866.

FATHER DE SMET remained in St. Louis, except for some short side trips, until September, 1860, when he set out for Europe. He confined his travels on the continent to France, Belgium and Holland, and on the 2d of April, 1861, embarked for his return voyage. It was with many forebodings that he neared the shores of his adopted land, for it had become known to him before sailing that the "standard of rebellion had been raised by the South." He arrived in New York on April 15th only to find his worst fears confirmed. "A few hours before our arrival," he writes, "the great American metropolis had been thrown into the wildest excitement and consternation by the tidings that Fort Sumter in South Carolina had been taken by the Rebels, and that the Stars and Stripes, the far-and-wide honored flag of the great Republic, had been battered down by the enemies of the Union — once Union men themselves — reduced to mere shreds, a rag! Unpardonable outrage! — one which I fear will be avenged in a deluge of blood. On hearing the sad news of the insulting and arrogant deed, tears flowed freely from many an eye among the passengers of the *Fulton,* and were followed by loud imprecations and threats against the Secessionists. I am not a man for war and am averse to its horrors and bloodshed; but I was deeply moved at the scenes I witnessed on the day of my landing on the shores of my once happy and beloved adopted country. I prayed and prayed most earnestly, that the Lord in his mercy might allay and soften the rising passions, and that peace might again be restored in this now distracted land."

Father De Smet went directly to St. Louis and he notes that "on the long stretch of over a thousand miles nothing was heard but the clang of arms and the war cry repeated in every city, town, and hamlet; while from every house and spire, and on every mountain top and hill, and in every breeze, waved the insulted Stars and Stripes."

Father De Smet was a loyal citizen, a Union man; but he was not what he later calls a radical. His views were doubtless modified by the atmosphere of St. Louis, which was his home, and he saw more clearly the other side of the question than people of the North generally did. His prayers were for peace, but as between the North and South his sympathies were with the North. At one time he frankly doubted that the North would succeed, for he felt that so great a section of people of the Anglo-Saxon race could not be subdued. As the war progressed and the power of the North became more autocratic, he dissented from some of its extreme measures; but there was never a shadow of doubt of his unswerving loyalty to the Government.

A matter growing out of the war that gave the Jesuits considerable trouble was the draft, which made no exception in favor of the clerical profession. The Jesuits were few in number, and in addition to their priestly duties nearly all of them were teachers in institutions of learning. The Society was poor and had no funds to hire substitutes for their priests either in the field or in the schools. Besides this, they were on principle opposed to war, so that on the whole the situation was a trying one. Father De Smet went to Washington, saw President Lincoln and others, and obtained such a degree of exemption as it was possible to give under the rigid terms of the law. Later in the war two fathers were drafted and Father De Smet was compelled again to intercede. The authorities had no power to exempt them directly, but they were told to remain at their work and they would not be ordered to the front.

Father De Smet made a journey to Washington in the fall of 1861 and was there at the time of the disastrous battle of Bull Run. In the spring of 1862 he went again and made a third trip in the fall of that year. On this last journey he records that he "heard the roar of the cannon in the battle of Antietam."

In the *Letters* are some interesting notes upon the second of the above journeys, in which the modest priest is seen visiting the chief magistrate of the nation, dining with the ministers of foreign nations, and displaying a naive skill at diplomacy with the departments of the Government. They can best be told in his own words: "Towards the end of last February I had to go to Washington to arrange the accounts of our Indian Missions among the Potawatomies and Osages. Since the outbreak of the war and the great expenditures which it occasions, the Government is necessarily delayed in the payment of its contracts with the Indian tribes, the motto for to-day being 'the expenses of the war before everything else.' A sum of over eighteen thousand dollars was due the missions. I presented my request to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, with the remark that a refusal or delay on the part of the Government of its debt and promise would singularly disarrange the ideas of our Indians, who have thus far been loyal and attached to the Union side; that if we were obliged by lack of means to send some 400 children back to their poor parents, they would conclude 'that their Great Father, President Lincoln, had taken the money that ought to have gone to the support of their children and used it for other purposes,' and that they might be led in consequence to lend a favorable ear to the Secessionists. This all but *casus belli* made the Superintendent smile and pleased him greatly, and he promised to do his utmost to satisfy our good savages."

In another letter he writes: "In Washington I had the honor of being presented to our President, Lincoln, and I talked with him for over an hour. Mr. Blondeel, the Belgian Ambassador, showed me a great deal of attention; he is very well disposed toward us. He obliged me to dine with him, together with the ambassadors of France, Russia and Spain. They all had their *grands cordons,* and I had a frock-coat well worn and with two buttons gone. However, it all went off very agreeably. I did the best I could among these great personages; but I remain of the opinion that I shall always be more at my ease sitting on the grass and surrounded with savages, each one making his jokes and at the same time eating with good appetite a bear rib, or roasting a piece of buffalo or fat dog."

In the summer of 1862 Father De Smet made the long journey to Fort Benton and back. He traveled on the American Fur Company steamer *Spread Eagle.* His purpose was to revisit the tribes, baptize their children, study the prospects of new missions and carry supplies of various kinds to the mountain missions. While at Fort Benton he made one of a party to visit the Great Falls of the Missouri. On his way back to St. Louis he left the boat at Fort Leavenworth and made a side trip to St. Mary's Mission, Kansas.

Father De Smet was deeply grieved and alarmed at the state of things as he found it among the tribes of the Missouri, particularly the Sioux nations. He had never before seen them so hostile and it was evident that they were on the eve of an outbreak against the whites. In fact he had scarcely returned to his home in St. Louis when the storm burst. The historic Minnesota Massacre took place August 18–21, 1862, and a brief sketch of its rise and progress for two or three years is necessary to a full understanding of the subsequent course of events.

The massacre was an outburst of Indian rage and vengeance over the wrongs they had suffered at the hands of the whites and the evident fate that awaited them with the progress of settlement. The opportunity came with the American Civil War, which the Indians were led to believe had so crippled the Government that it could not make effective resistance. The Indians were unquestionably encouraged and abetted by British influence through the Canadian half-breeds who circulated freely south of the border. In the three days that the massacre lasted, nearly one thousand lives and two million dollars' worth of property were destroyed.

The Government instantly took the matter in hand and placed a military force in the field under General H. H. Sibley. The Indians were beaten in several battles in the fall of 1862, a large number of hostiles were captured, and thirty-eight of their number were hung, December 26, 1862.[1]

In 1863 a joint campaign under Generals Sibley and Sully was planned by General Pope, Commander of the Department. General Sibley was to proceed west to the Missouri, driving the Indians before him, and General Sully was to go up the Missouri and intercept them, forming a junction with Sibley. General Sibley defeated the Indians in three battles and reached the Missouri July 29th. Sully had failed to connect, but about a month later his own force met the Indians at Whitestone Hill and again defeated them. Still unsubdued the Indians kept up hostilities and in 1864 a very large force under General Sully was sent against them. The Indians were badly defeated in the battle of Kill Deer Mountain July 28th.

The severe chastisement which they had now received, and the final victory of the Government in the Civil War soon after, led to temporary peace with the Indians; but their hatred of the whites was not quenched and they remained hostile in spirit, if not in actual deed, until their final subjugation some twelve years later.

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[1] For Father De Smet's appeal to the Government in behalf of these Indians, see page 1510 of the *Letters*.

Such was the situation along the Missouri river from 1862 for several years. It greatly interfered with Father De Smet's plans. It was his intention to commence a mission among the Sioux in 1863, but he was compelled to abandon the attempt for the time, and content himself with a voyage to Fort Benton in the interest of the mountain missions. He left St. Louis May 9, 1863, with two Italian Brothers, on the American Fur Company steamer *Nellie Rogers*. The journey passed off without mishap of any kind until they reached the mouth of Milk river, where the water was found too low for the boat to proceed farther. The entire load of freight and all the passengers had to go ashore and await some means of getting to Fort Benton by land.

While encamped on the banks of the river for several weeks awaiting transportation from Fort Benton, Father De Smet worked assiduously among the Indians, principally the Crows and Grosventres of the Prairies. He had a large tent, given him by General Harney, which he used as a chapel, and in it he conducted religious exercises, just as he did on the boats on which he traveled. One day the camp was attacked by a war party of 600 Sioux and they were saved from what might have been a massacre by the courageous action of Father De Smet in going out alone to meet the Indians. They recognized him, received him in the utmost friendliness, and after an interview and some present-making withdrew without further hostile occurrence.

Before the *Nellie Rogers* turned back, a deplorable incident occurred, the details of which are very obscure. Father De Smet, who was certainly cognizant of the facts, makes no mention of it. It was the killing of Owen McKenzie by Malcom Clark. McKenzie, half-breed son of the distinguished trader, Kenneth McKenzie, was at this time in charge of Fort Galpin near by. Clark, a passenger on the boat, was a noted character in the upper country and considered something of a desperado. He and McKenzie had a standing grudge between them relating to some former accounts. McKenzie was a great drinker and visited the *Nellie Rogers* in an intoxicated condition. Accounts differ as to what happened in detail, but the main fact is that Clark shot McKenzie in the cabin, killing him instantly. Whether he had sufficient provocation for his act, may never be known, unless some surviving witness of the tragedy, if there be any, shall tell the story; but tradition has handed down the act as a cold-blooded murder.

The deed came near resulting in more serious consequences than the loss of the victim's life. McKenzie, besides being a half-breed, was married among the Indians and was personally popular with them and with the white population of that country. A band of Indians were encamped near by and when they heard of McKenzie's murder, they were desperately wrought up over it and vowed summary vengeance. Father De Smet, it is said, interfered and prevented trouble and Clark was promptly hustled out of the way.[2]

After a time the ox trains came down from Fort Benton to transport the cargo the rest of the way. It was a long tedious journey of 350 miles, over parched plains, and in the heat of summer; but it was accomplished in safety. Father De Smet here met Father Imoda from St. Peter's on Sun river and turned over to him the articles destined for his mission, and the recruits whom he had brought with him.

"I had thus far fulfilled the wishes of my superiors," writes Father De Smet. "I had brought the two Italian Brothers to the first Rocky Mountain mission. My own principal object was a missionary visit to the wandering tribes of the plains. This I had accomplished only in part.

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[2] There is a tradition that Father De Smet married Clark to his second wife.

When I left St. Louis, I had intended to see a very large number of Indians during the summer and fall, but local conditions and the dangers of the cruel Sioux war had absolutely blocked my plan. The contagion of war had spread to the upper tribes of the Sioux, who had hitherto been at peace with the whites. The reports that reached us every day of robberies and massacres committed by the Indians of the plains, on the one hand, and on the Salt Lake route by marauders and murderers of another species, the offscourings of civilization, living by robbery and assassination on the unhappy travelers whom they meet, caused me to take the resolution of returning to St. Louis by the Pacific Ocean."

Father De Smet might have added that no steamboat succeeded in reaching Benton that year and that he would have had to make all the way back in an open boat, which would have been practically equivalent to suicide. He left Fort Benton for St. Ignatius Mission on the 25th of August. This proved to be his last visit to the mountains. At St. Ignatius he found missionary affairs prospering, but he noted with great apprehension the vast changes then sweeping over the country as a result of the discovery of gold in Montana. He thus refers to this important matter: "It is impossible to overestimate the dangers which, just at this time, are threatening all the mountain tribes, through the approach of the whites, the ease with which liquor, so fatal to the Indians, can be obtained, and the accompaniment of all the vices and excesses of our modern civilization; especially as understood and practiced by our American pioneers. These things must be seen to be appreciated and believed."

But if Father De Smet saw much to fear for his Indians, he also saw much to hope in the new field opening up in this region. Where there used to be one savage he saw that there would soon be a hundred settlers, and the Church began at once to establish missions in the little mining towns, thus laying the real foundation of its present prosperous condition in Montana. With an affectionate pleasure, born of the memory of former years, Father De Smet found Father Ravalli, one of the noblest men that ever labored in the ranks of the Church in Montana, rebuilding the long neglected mission in St. Mary's valley.

Father De Smet left St. Ignatius on the 8th of September; reached the mission of the Sacred Heart on the 18th and Fort Vancouver on the 8th of October. After a brief delay here, he sailed from Portland, October 13th, stopped at Victoria, Vancouver Island, and reached San Francisco on the 21st. There were no incidents of especial importance on the rest of the journey. He left San Francisco on the 3d of November, crossed the Isthmus on the 18th and reached New York on Thanksgiving Day. He called at Washington on his way west and finally reached St. Louis on the 1st of December. "The day following," he writes, "I offered the holy sacrifice of the altar, as a thanksgiving service for all the benefits received from heaven in my long, painful and dangerous tour, upon rivers and seas and in diverse lands, through numerous bands of hostile Indians, in the mountainous portions of Idaho infested by white marauders and assassins of the lowest and vilest sort, and on the two great oceans, the Pacific and Atlantic, ranged at present by hostile ships of the American Confederacy." [8]

The terrible state of things in the Sioux country at this time gave the Government a good deal of uneasiness. It was unfortunate that just as the great strain of the Rebellion was taxing its energies to the utmost, it should find the most powerful confederacy of Indians on the continent in bitter hostility against it. When Father De Smet passed through Washington on his way home in December the Secretary of Interior and Commissioner of Indian Affairs besought him to try again to see the Sioux and induce them to come to terms. It was a difficult role which he was asked to fill. His mission had always been one of peace. On the banner which he carried were only the mild emblems of Christianity. No weapons of slaughter ever accompanied him to the wigwams of the Indians. Now he was asked to accompany a military expedition to be sent against them. While it was the chief desire of his heart to stop the war, he felt that he would be compromising his entire influence among the Indians if he went to them in company with armed soldiers, or under the flag which they looked upon as the symbol of ruin to their people. His final decision in the matter is thus stated in his own words: "I have been requested, by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, 'to undertake the journey and to bring about, if possible, a peace among the hostile Sioux, acting in concert with the commander of the troops and the appointed agents.' They offer to pay all my expenses, with a handsome remuneration for myself. Not being well as yet, I have not accepted their request. I fear I would lose all caste among the Indians. They have hitherto looked upon me as the bearer to them of the word of the Great Spirit and have universally been kind and attentive wherever I have met them. Should I present myself in their midst as the bearer of the word of the Big Chief of the Big Knives in Washington, no longer their Great Father but now their greatest enemy, it would place me in rather an awkward situation.[4] I have written to the Commissioner that if I can go, I will go on my own hook, without pay or remuneration; visit the friendly Sioux first, and in their company try to penetrate among their fighting brethren and do my utmost to preach peaceand good will to them, and to make them come to a good understanding with the general in command and the agents of Government."

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[8] In all these recent extensive travels and those yet remaining, it should be kept in mind that Father De Smet was getting to be an old man. He was now sixty-three years of age.

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[4] In another letter Father De Smet wrote: "My reception would be very different if I presented myself in company with the General of the American army and the agents of the Government. Surely my black robe would then cease to be a passport for me into the Indian country. I tried to make the Commissioner of Indian Affairs see this."

In accordance with this resolution Father De Smet left St. Louis April 20th, going as far as Fort Berthold. He remained in that neighborhood nearly all summer, visiting several Sioux bands but spending most of his time among the Mandans, Aricaras and Minnetarees. At Fort Berthold he did a very brave and gallant thing. A large war party of Sioux appeared on the opposite bank. He crossed to meet them, contrary to the advice of every one in the post. He was well received and found that they had come there for the express purpose of seeing him. He remained with them for nearly three hours. The chiefs received with ready ear the message he brought from the Government and the conference was entirely satisfactory.

While at Berthold Father De Smet learned that the Santee Sioux, who were mainly instrumental in the Minnesota massacre, and who were then hovering on the British frontier, would like to see him and hear what the Government had to say to them. De Smet thought he ought to go, but before doing so felt that he must consult General Sully, who was coming up the river with a strong military force. He descended the river to meet him and told him what he proposed; but the General thought that it was his duty to deliver a blow to these Indians that they would remember, and that it was best to talk peace only after they had been punished for what they had done. "In consequence of the General's declaration and the circumstances of the case, my errand of peace, though sanctioned by the Government, became bootless and could only serve to place me in a false position — that of being face to face with the Indians without being able to do them the least service. So I took the resolution of returning to St. Louis." He arrived there in the latter part of August and a few days later set out for Washington to report the result of his labors.

A week after his return from Washington he left St. Louis for Europe and reached Liverpool late in October. He spent a little time in England, then crossed to Belgium and soon after went to Rome, where he was received with great consideration by Pope Gregory XVI. He returned to Belgium in December and spent the first part of the year 1865 in visiting the principal cities of that country and of Holland, England and Ireland. He sailed from Liverpool June 7th and was back in St. Louis on the last day of that month. He spent the rest of that year in St. Louis.[5]

In the year 1866 Father De Smet made his last trip to Fort Benton. It was an interesting and profitable voyage and is told in great detail in the *Letters*. In particular, he prepared, at the request of a friend, descriptions of the Missouri river, the steamboats that plied it in his day, and the dangers and perils of its navigation, which are undoubtedly the most complete that have come down to us. Father De Smet left St. Louis April 9th. At Fort Sully he met many of the Sioux bands and they laid before him, as was their custom, all their wrongs and sufferings. They were still in a hostile mood and the boat had been thoroughly barricaded and put in fighting trim while passing through their country.

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[5] Soon after Father De Smet sailed from Europe on this occasion he was made Chevalier of the Order of Leopold by the Belgian king. Following is a record of the event in the official journal, *Le Moniteur Belge*, of June 24, 1865:

(1) Ministères de la Justice et des Affaires Etrangères.

Ordre de Léopold.—Nomination.

LEOPOLD, Roi des Belges,

A tous présents et à venir, SALUT.

Voulant donner au Révérend Père De Smet (P.-J.), missionnaire dans l'Amérique du Nord, un témoignage de Notre bienveillance;

Sur la proposition de Nos Ministres de la Justice et des Affaires Etrangères,

Nous avons arrêté et arrêtons:

Art. 1er. Le Révérend Père De Smet (P.-J.) est nommé chevalier de l'Ordre de Léopold.

Il portera la décoration civile.

Art. 2. Il prendra rang dans l'Ordre à dater de ce jour.

Art. 3. Notre Ministre des affaires étrangères, ayant l'administration de l'Ordre, est chargé de l'exécution du présent arrêté.

Donné à Laeken, le 18 juin 1865.

LEOPOLD.

Par le Roi.
Le Ministre de la Justice,
VICTOR TESCH.
Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères.
Ch. ROGIER.

Father De Smet reached Fort Benton June 7, 1866, after a prosperous voyage in which he had satisfactory interviews with all the river tribes. There is little information covering the return trip. He was back in St. Louis by the middle of July and remained there the rest of the year.

CHAPTER IX.

PEACE COMMISSIONS OF 1867 AND 1868.

Critical situation in Indian country — Father De Smet, 1867, goes on peace mission to the Sioux — Incidents of the journey — Success of the mission — On way back meets Peace Commission — Invited to accompany them — Illness prevents — Mission of 1868 — Journey to Cheyenne — Father De Smet goes to Fort Rice — Starts in quest of hostile camp — Meeting envoys from same — Arrival at camp — Joyful welcome — The great council — Deputies sent to meet commissioners — Arrival at Fort Rice — Successful council — Father De Smet's great services.

THE Indian affairs of the Government were at this time in critical shape and enlisted the constant efforts of the War and Interior Departments to prevent further outrages and to arrive at some peaceful solution of existing troubles. The years 1867 and 1868 were the most important in Father De Smet's life, because of the part which he took in this work of pacification. He had greater influence with the Indians than any other living white man, and the Government was glad to avail itself of his good offices. Early in 1867 the Secretary of the Interior requested him to go to the hostile tribes "to endeavor to bring them back to peace and submission and to prevent as far as possible the destruction of property and the murder of the whites." "I accepted the commission," Father De Smet writes, "there being nothing in it contrary to my duties as a missionary, and with the distinct understanding that I shall not accept any remuneration for my services. I prefer to be altogether independent in money matters, as my only object is to be of use to the whites and still more to the poor Indians."

In his account of his long journey this year Father De Smet gives an excellent summary of the wrongs which the Indians were suffering, and of the savage cruelties which they were perpetrating upon the whites. His natural sympathies were with the Indians and they knew it, and this may have been the secret of his wonderful influence over them.

He left St. Louis April 12th by a different route from that followed heretofore. He went by rail to Chicago and thence started for Omaha on the Northwestern line, which had just been opened through to the Missouri river. Unluckily there had been an extraordinary downpour of rain for some days previously and the tracks and bridges were badly washed out on the western end of the line. With much delay he finally got as far as Dennison, whence he was compelled to travel by wagon about a hundred miles to Sioux City.

How constantly in service were Father De Smet's powers of observation is well illustrated by the accurate description he has given us of the rolling prairie country of Iowa — a description which will at once appeal to any one who has ever crossed that country: "All this region resembles an agitated sea, suddenly become motionless. Day after day, it is the same monotony. You go up and down an interminable succession of larger or smaller hills and valleys, like terrestrial billows. A fringe of timber can be seen along the streams and in some deep valleys and ravines in the higher portions. In summer this region is an ocean of verdure, adorned with flowers, always agreeable to the eye. In autumn, fires run over it and cover the whole surface with the sad black tint of mourning. Then comes winter and spreads its shroud of white over all nature."

From Sioux City Father De Smet took the steamer *Guidon* and continued his route up the river. With him were twenty-six Yankton Sioux and their chief Pananniapapi, a Christian Indian, between whom and Father De Smet there had long subsisted the most affectionate friendship. The destination of the Indians was the Yankton Agency near Fort Randall. Father De Smet stopped there a few days until the *Bighorn,* which had his main outfit on board, should arrive. He lodged at the house of the agent and there set up his altar and ministered to the spiritual welfare of the Indians while he was among them.

Upon the arrival of the *Bighorn* Father De Smet resumed his journey. All along the river from the Yankton Agency to Fort Buford at the mouth of the Yellowstone,— at Forts Thompson, Sully, Rice and Berthold — there were hundreds and thousands of Indians in waiting. Father De Smet's interviews with them were everywhere satisfactory and it seemed to him that peace was clearly in sight if the Indians could be assured of fair treatment on the part of the whites. "I am firmly convinced," he writes, "that if the just claims of the Indians are attended to; if their annuities are paid them at the proper time and place; if the agents and other employees of the Government treat them with honesty and justice; if they are supplied with the necessary tools for carpentry and agriculture — the tribes of the Upper Missouri will maintain peace with the whites; and the warlike bands who to-day infest the plains of the Far West and the valley of the Platte, where there is so much destruction of property and loss of life, will promptly cease their depredations and would not be long in joining the stay-at-home tribes."

This was undoubtedly the case; but the conditions named by Father De Smet were impracticable. The onward rush of emigration could not be checked, and it was that that made the difficulty. It drew all the lesser evils in its train.

Father De Smet sent several embassies to the hostile Indians and succeeded in getting upward of a hundred chiefs and warriors to come to Fort Rice and meet Generals Sully and Parker; but owing to the delay of arrival of these two officers, the Indians were compelled to leave, on account of lack of provisions, without having seen them. They sent back word that they were very anxious to see them and that they were desirous of peace.

Father De Smet spent nearly four months on this mission, in which time he did a great deal to prepare the minds of the Indians for peace. On his way down the river he met, at Fort Leavenworth, the new Peace Commission appointed by the Government to take up the whole question of dealing with the Indians. It was composed of several of the leading officers of the Army. They invited Father De Smet to become one of their number and accompany them in all their visits to the tribes. He accepted, but his baggage having gone to St. Louis, he was obliged to go after it. While there he was taken seriously ill and his physicians would not consent to his going on the trip.[1]

As soon as Father De Smet's health would permit he took up with his accustomed energy the matter of reaching the hostile Indians the following year; for it was expected that he would accompany the new commission on their tour. His letters, both to the agents in the upper country and to his correspondents elsewhere, are full of the details of the important work. Briefly, his program was to penetrate the interior from Fort Rice or Fort Berthold and find the hostiles, and try to bring them to some point where the commissioners could meet them. It was a most dangerous undertaking, for it was not believed that any white man could approach them unprotected except at the cost of his life. It is saying a great deal that there was only one man in the United States who could do this, but we believe it to be the truth.[2]

On the 30th of March, 1868, Father De Smet left St. Louis on the most important mission of his whole career. He was in company with the members of the commission, including Generals Sherman, Sheridan, Harney, Terry and several others. They went to Omaha via Chicago and thence to Cheyenne, holding a council with some Sioux bands on the way. From Cheyenne they made a brief pleasure excursion to Sherman Pass across which the new Union Pacific railway had but recently been built. The commissioners then went to Fort Laramie while De Smet returned to Omaha to go from there to Fort Rice. He left Omaha on the steamer *Columbia*, but made slow progress owing to low water.

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[1] The Secretary of the Interior wrote thus to Father De Smet concerning his work on this expedition: "You will please accept my thanks for the faithful and efficient manner in which you have discharged the duties entrusted to your care."

[2] "Father De Smet, alone of the entire white race, could penetrate to these cruel savages and return safe and sound. One of the chiefs, in speaking to him while he was in the hostile camp, said to him: 'If it had been any other man than you, Black-robe, this day would have been his last.'"—*General Stanley.*

Father De Smet in his narrative of this voyage mentions some of the characteristic experiences which his long acquaintance with the Indian country had developed. If it was known that he was coming up the river there were always people at the landings to see him. "When the boat stopped to cut or load a supply of wood," he writes, "I often had occasion to exercise the holy ministry among the inhabitants of the region who came down to the woodyard or wharf, marrying couples who were awaiting the presence of a priest to receive the nuptial benediction, and regenerating in the holy waters of baptism a great number of children and numerous adults."

And this is the experience he usually passed through when he found himself among a boat-load of passengers: "When the priest appears in the midst of such a throng he is critically scrutinized. He is measured from head to foot. He is like a curious beast in a menagerie. He is regarded with surprise and people are slow to approach him. But once the ice is broken, he is overwhelmed with questions upon all points of religion. These questions are quite often sensible enough, but generally they are odd and sometimes even indelicate and gross, denoting a profound ignorance which inspires only pity and compassion."

The *Columbia* arrived at Fort Rice May 24th. Father De Smet passed a week in religious work among the Indians and Catholic soldiers, baptizing, marrying, and receiving confessions.[8] He then spent two days in interviews with the chiefs and in making preparations for departure. His plan seemed wildly audacious to both whites and Indians, and they freely predicted a fatal termination; but he told them that thousands of pure souls were praying for him and that their prayers would be heard and he would return in safety. His answer inspired courage. There were all the volunteers that he needed. Mr. Charles E. Galpin, an old Indian trader of great experience, who had married among the Sioux, accompanied him as interpreter. There were besides several of the principal chiefs and eighty warriors representing nearly all the Sioux bands. They went in the double capacity of protecting Father De Smet, if need were, and of persuading their hostile brethren to listen to him.

The first object of their journey was to find the camp of the hostiles, made up of malcontents from the various Sioux bands, who were uncompromising in their hatred of the whites and who refused to enter into any treaties with them. It was these Indians, a very numerous and powerful band, who were responsible for the depredations and savage cruelties at that time so prevalent throughout the West. The start was made on the morning of the 3d of June: "We were all assembled;" says Father De Smet, "a large circle was formed, in which several officers from the fort and some of the soldiers joined, besides a great number of Indians from all these different tribes. I then offered a solemn prayer to the Great Spirit to put us in his keeping, and made a short address to the numerous friends who surrounded us, recommending us to their pious recollection."

Father De Smet gives at considerable length the details of this remarkable expedition. The route lay directly west from Fort Rice, south of the modern line of the Northern Pacific Railroad, for upward of 350 miles to the place where the Powder river empties into the Yellowstone. It was a long and tedious march, involving a passage of the Bad Lands country; but everybody was in good cheer and the physical obstacles did no more than retard their progress. On the 9th of June, having seen no signs of the hostile band, some scouts were sent out to beat up the country. The line of march of the main column was agreed upon and the scouts were to rejoin it as soon as they should gain any definite information. They were given liberal presents of tobacco to present to the hostiles, if found, for the sending of tobacco "is the same thing as a formal invitation, or the announcement of the desire to meet and confer upon important matters. If the tobacco is accepted, it is a sure sign that you will be admitted among them; if, on the contrary, it is refused, you may understand that all communication is forbidden, and govern yourself accordingly."

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[8] "In my quality of envoy extraordinary of the Government, I was accorded the title of Major, singularly associated, it must be admitted, with that of Jesuit. However, it had this advantage that it gave me easier access to the soldiers, of whom a large number are Catholics. I gave them, as priest, not as major, all my spare time."

On the 16th the scouts returned "at the head of a deputation of eighteen warriors, announcing their arrival by shouts and joyful songs. All came and shook hands with me with especial eagerness, and after we had smoked the pipe of peace together,—a first proof of their good will toward me—they announced in the name of the head chiefs of their camp, that 'my tobacco had been favorably received; that entry into their camp was open to the Black-robe alone; that no other white man would get out of it with his scalp; and that all the chiefs and warriors were awaiting me with impatience, wishing to hear me and learn the motives of my visit.' Afterwards we exchanged news. I learned that the big camp was three days' march away, in the Yellowstone valley, a few miles above the mouth of Powder river. The night was spent in feasts between the Indians of my escort and the newcomers, mingled with joyful songs and fraternal rounds of the calumet. There were uproarious reunions, *à la sauvage,* but harmony and cordiality prevailed."

Pursuing their march through a most difficult tract of country, they finally came, on the 19th, to the bluffs of Powder river, and beheld from their crest a beautiful panorama outspread before them. In a country where there is not moisture enough to sustain trees, and the eye is rarely refreshed by the sight of that beautiful object in nature, it is an exquisite joy to the weary traveler to come upon a large stream whose banks are lined with forests. Standing upon the lofty bluffs that define the courses of the Powder and Yellowstone valleys, our travelers beheld to the west the broad valley of the latter stream and to the south that of the Powder. Along each were lines of trees that marked the course of the streams as far as the eye could reach, while the glimmering water appeared here and there like quiet mirrors on the landscape.

But Father De Smet saw other sights on this occasion which gave him but little time to admire the beauties of nature. "Some four miles off in the Powder river bottoms," he writes, "we saw a strong force of horsemen composed of 400 to 500 warriors coming to meet me. I at once had my standard of peace hoisted, with the holy name of Jesus on one side and on the other the image of the Virgin Mary, surrounded with gilt stars. They took it at first sight for the hated flag of the United States. At this signal all the cavalcade halted and appeared to enter into consultation. Immediately afterward, the four head chiefs came toward us at full speed and seemed, as it were, to flit around the banner. They considered it, and upon preceiving its meaning and high importance, they came up and shook my hand and made signals to all their warriors to advance. They then formed into a single long line or phalanx; we did the same, and with the flag at our head we went to meet them. At the same time the air resounded with shouts and songs of joy on both sides. I was touched even to tears at the sight of the reception which these sons of the desert, still in paganism, had prepared for the poor Black-robe. It was the fairest spectacle in which I have ever had the happiness of taking part."

There was much wild noise and commotion, but all in good spirit, and when they reached the main body, Father De Smet shook hands with all of them and won their hearts at once by the benevolence of his manner and his evident interest in their welfare. It now remained to make the final march of some ten or twelve miles to the main camp. Four head chiefs acted as a bodyguard to Father De Smet to protect him against any treacherous attack. After crossing Powder river close column was formed and everything was conducted with military strictness and precision. At the head of the column was Father De Smet's banner. The Indians were decked out in the ultra style of the wild warriors, to a degree, in fact, rarely witnessed at that late day. It was an impressive and awe-inspiring scene. "Nevertheless," says Father De Smet, "my heart was as tranquil and my mind as calm as if I had been in the midst of you."

They found the main camp to consist of some four or five thousand Indians who received them with every demonstration of joy. A large lodge had been prepared for Father De Smet by Sitting Bull, the leader of the hostiles. The Father was weary with his long journey and after a little luncheon lay down in his lodge and went to sleep. When he awoke Sitting Bull was beside him, and with him were three other leading chiefs. Sitting Bull at once addressed Father De Smet: "Black-robe, I hardly sustain myself beneath the weight of white men's blood that I have shed. The whites provoked the war; their injustices, their indignities to our families, the cruel, unheard-of and wholly unprovoked massacre at Fort Lyon," (where Chivington commanded) "of six or seven hundred women, children and old men, shook all the veins which bind and support me. I rose, tomahawk in hand, and I have done all the hurt to the whites that I could. Today thou art amongst us, and in thy presence my arms stretch to the ground as if dead. I will listen to thy good words, and as bad as I have been to the whites, just as good am I ready to become toward them."

The chiefs and Father De Smet then conferred about the great council which it was proposed to hold on the morrow to determine what should be done about going to see the commissioners. The rest of the day until late at night was spent in visits and conversations with the leading men of the camp. Here occurred one of those striking incidents with which Father De Smet's intercourse with the Indians was so full. We give it in the Father's own words: "A venerable old man, of remarkable stature, but bowed beneath the weight of age, supporting himself on a staff tipped with an old bayonet, came to offer me his hand and express his happiness at seeing me again. He wore upon his breast a copper cross, old and worn. This was the only religious token that I had observed in all the camp; it filled me with joy and emotion. I questioned him eagerly and with interest, to know from whom he had received it. After a moment's thought, and counting on his fingers, he answered, 'It was you, Blackrobe, who gave me this cross. I have never laid it aside for twenty-six snows. The cross has raised me to the clouds among my people' (meaning that it had made him great and respectable). 'If I still walk on earth, it is to the cross that I owe it, and the Great Spirit has blessed my numerous family.'

"I begged him to explain further, and he continued: 'When I was younger, I loved whiskey to madness, and at every chance I would get drunk and commit excesses. It is now twenty-six snows since my last turbulent orgy. I was stupid and sick from it; just then I had the good fortune to meet you, and you made known to me that my behavior was against the will of the Master of Life and offended him grievously. Since then I have often had opportunities; my friends have sometimes sought to induce me to join them in their illicit enjoyments, and often my old evil inclination would combat my good will which desired to resist the temptation. Every time the cross has come to my help. I would take it between my hands, imploring the Great Spirit to give me strength, and your words, Black-robe, would come to my mind. Ever since we first met, I have renounced drink, and have never tasted a drop.' "

Father De Smet was deeply touched by the incident and endeavored to instill into the mind of the Indian the deeper truths of the Christian life. The old man was so enraptured with the venerable apostle that when Father De Smet left the council he followed him over three hundred miles.

The 20th of June was the day set for the council and great preparations were made for it. A circular space of about 170 feet in diameter was inclosed by a high wall composed of large skin tepees of some twenty robes each, spread out flat and hung from pine posts set around the circumference of the circle. Father De Smet's banner was hoisted on the side of the circle opposite the entrance and a seat was prepared for him near it. When the Indians had taken their places, Father De Smet "was solemnly introduced into this *salon champêtre,* which was improvised for the occasion by the two head chiefs, Four Horns and Black Moon. I took my seat. The council was opened with songs and dances, noisy, joyful and very wild, in which the warriors alone took part. Then Four Horns lighted his calumet of peace; he presented it first solemnly to the Great Spirit, imploring his light and favor, and then offered it to the four cardinal points, to the sun and the earth, as witnesses to the action of the council. Then he himself passed the calumet from mouth to mouth. I was the first to receive it, with my interpreter, and every

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chief was placed according to the rank that he held in the tribe. Each one took a few puffs. When the ceremony of the calumet was finished, the head chief addressed me, saying, 'Speak, Black-robe, my ears are open to hear your words.' All this was done with the greatest gravity and amid a profound silence."

Father De Smet then arose and lifted his hands to heaven and offered a prayer to the Great Spirit, imploring his blessing upon this solemn occasion. Then for an hour he talked to them of his mission; the purely disinterested motives that had brought him there; the wish of the Great Father for peace; the atrocious crimes that had been committed on both sides; the readiness of the Great Father to aid them, and the uselessness of contending against his strength, so many times greater than their own. These points were all discussed at considerable length. Four chiefs spoke, but Father De Smet gives us only the speech of Black Moon, which, he says, was essentially the same as the others. With all the solemnity and stately form of Indian ceremony, "he rose, calumet in hand, and addressing his people, said: 'Lend an ear to my words.' Then he raised the calumet solemnly to heaven and lowered it to earth; thus invoking, by the Indian interpretation, heaven and earth as his witnesses. At his request I touched the calumet with my lips, putting my right hand on the stem. Then he said in a loud voice: 'The Black-robe has made a long journey to come to us; his presence among us makes me very glad, and with all my heart I wish him welcome to my country. I can understand all the words that the Black-robe has just said to us; they are good and filled with truth. I shall lay them up in my memory. Still, our hearts are sore; they have received deep wounds. These wounds have yet to be healed. A cruel war has desolated and impoverished our country; the desolating torch of war was not kindled by us; it was the Sioux east of us and the Cheyennes south of us who raised the war first, to revenge themselves for the white man's

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cruelties and injustice. We have been forced to take part, for we too have been victims of his rapacity and wrongdoing. To-day, when we ride over our plains, we find them spotted here and there with blood; and these are not the bloodstains of buffalo and deer killed in the chase, but those of our own comrades or of white men sacrificed to vengeance. The buffalo, the elk, the antelope, the bighorn and the deer have quitted our immense plains; we hardly find them any more, except at intervals, and always less numerous. May it not be the odor of human blood that puts them to flight?

"'I will say further — against our will the whites are interlacing our country with their highways of transportation and emigration; they build forts at various points and mount thunders upon them. They kill our animals, and more than they need. They are cruel to our people, maltreat and massacre them without reason, or for the slightest cause, even when they are searching for food, for animals and roots, to nourish their wives and children. They cut down our forests in spite of us and without paying us their value. They are ruining our land. We are opposed to having these big roads which drive the buffalo away from our country. This soil is ours and we are determined not to yield an inch of it. Here our fathers were born and are buried. We desire, like them, to live here, and to be buried in this same soil. We have been forced to hate the whites; let them treat us like brothers and the war will cease. Let them stay at home; we will never go to trouble them. To see them come into our land and build their cabins revolts us, and we are determined to resist or die. Thou, Messenger of Peace, thou hast given us a glimpse of a better future. Very well; so be it; let us hope. Let us throw a veil over the past and let it be forgotten.

"'I have only a word more to say. In the presence of all my people, I express to you here my thanks for the good news that you have announced and for all your good counsel and advice. We accept your tobacco. Some of our warriors will go with you to Fort Rice to hear the words and the propositions of the Great Father's commissioners. If their words are acceptable, peace shall be made.'"

Sitting Bull, Two Bears and Running Antelope followed Black Moon. After the council had lasted some four hours it was decided to send a deputation to meet the commissioners. The Indians begged Father De Smet to leave his banner with them as a memento of the occasion, and he acceded to their request. He then withdrew to his lodge, whither he was followed by many Indians and particularly by mothers with their children.

The return journey was begun on the morning of the 21st, and on the 30th of June they entered Fort Rice amid the enthusiastic greetings of all present. The council with the commissioners took place two days later, and a treaty of peace was signed by all the chiefs and principal warriors. Then, on the 3d and 4th of July, a general distribution of presents was made and the council closed to the joy and satisfaction of both parties.

Father De Smet's work on this occasion was now done and he at once set out for home. His achievement was one of the most remarkable in the history of our Indian wars. He was sixty-eight years old and suffering with bodily infirmities which in a few years were to end fatally. He made a journey of 350 miles through a rough and unknown country to a large force of Indians who had sworn death to any white man who might fall within their power. There was no other man who could approach them. Yet by virtue of his great reputation among all the tribes, their absolute faith in his word and their belief that he had their interests at heart, and, we may add, his devout trust in the Lord whom he served, he did this remarkable thing, and brought about a peace in the most hateful and difficult situation that our Government had been called upon to face in all its troubles with the Indians. The commissioners formally acknowledged that, but for Father De Smet, their work would have been a failure. "We are well aware," they wrote him, "that our thanks can be of little worth to you, and that you will find your true reward for your labors and for the dangers and privations which you have encountered in the consciousness that you have done much to promote peace on earth and good will to men."

Father De Smet stopped at Fort Sully on his way down the river to minister to the spiritual welfare of the Indians there, and then resumed his voyage. He next stopped at Fort Leavenworth and went to St. Mary's Mission, and finally arrived in St. Louis about August 20th.

CHAPTER X.

CHARACTER OF FATHER DE SMET.

Visit to Europe — Return in 1869 — Visit to the Sioux country in 1870 — Bodily ailments — Serious illness — Launching of the *De Smet* — Last sickness — Death and burial — Character sketch.

AFTER Father De Smet's return from the upper country he sailed for Europe, leaving St. Louis on the 21st of November, 1868. He arrived at Termonde, his native place, about the middle of December and remained there the rest of the year. In the spring he visited the principal cities of Belgium, Holland, France and England, and sailed for America on the 21st of June, reaching St. Louis July 4th. That fall he visited Omaha, St. Mary's Mission and Chicago.

On June 1, 1870, he left St. Louis on his last voyage to the Indian country, going as far as the Grand River Agency. The particular purpose of this trip was to arrange for the establishment of a mission among the Sioux — an object which had long been dear to him but which he was never able to carry out. He returned to St. Louis early in August.

Owing to bodily indispositions Father De Smet remained quietly in St. Louis, except for a brief visit to Chicago, until June 25, 1871, when he left for Europe. His time while abroad on this last visit to his native land was spent much as his other visits had been, in touring the principal cities from which he could expect aid to the Indian missions. He left Europe April 11, 1872, and crossed the Atlantic for the last time, being his nineteenth voyage in the past fifty years. He remained in St. Louis the rest of the year.

The frequent use of the word "last" in describing

Father De Smet's doings in later years suggests only too clearly that the end of his life was at hand. It was indeed so, but before recording this inevitable event in human life, it will be well to note some facts regarding the failing health of the good priest.

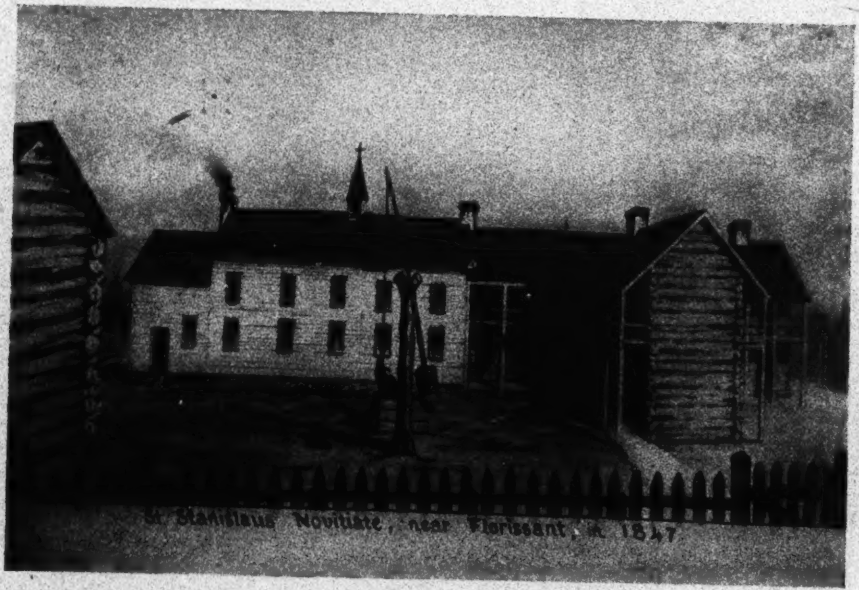
In spite of his longevity and great physical powers, Father De Smet was far from enjoying uninterrupted good health, and in the last twenty years of his life was never free from bodily ailments. This condition was undoubtedly due in large degree to the hardships of his missionary work and it began to develop soon after his return from Oregon in 1846. He was at this time and for several years afterward at the maximum of his physical weight, about 215 pounds. His corpulency did not please him, although he carried his flesh well, and was considered a remarkably fine looking man. "Pray hard for me," he wrote to a friend in 1851, "for my bones are getting too much covered. I begin to be uncomfortable, and daily must I hear 'How well you look!' 'You are improving!' 'What a fine country the Rocky Mountains must be!' Should I ever return to my old haunts, a great number of the lean gentry of St. Louis are determined to follow me and try their luck on buffalo, bear, badger and dog meat."

He was ailing a good deal in the years 1849–51, and in 1853 writes: "For two or three years back I find myself sensibly on the decline," his eyesight, in particular, failing rapidly. For the next few years he was very well, and in 1856 he records that "for years I have not been compelled to have recourse to a physician." But at the time of the Utah and Oregon expeditions he was suffering a good deal from an affection of his throat, and in 1861 he was very ill with some form of dyspepsia, and later in the same year with erysipelas. In the winter of 1863–4 he was dangerously ill with a combination of troubles, and he fully expected, at one time, that his end had come. He was ordered by his physician to let his beard grow for a while, and with the natural mirthfulness of his temperament he had his picture taken in this condition and sent it to his family in Europe. In a letter home at this time he refers to himself as "broken down with all sorts of infirmities."

A particular trouble which had afflicted him for many years was deafness in one of his ears. He frequently refers to his "good ear," and when, late in life, he seemed liable to lose that also, he was naturally very much disturbed. A strange result of the extraction of a large tooth had filled his ear with such a constant ringing that he could practically hear nothing. He sought medical advice without any good result, and finally improved the opportunity of a visit to Europe to see if he could get relief. Whether he ever experienced any material improvement in this respect his letters do not say.

The most serious of Father De Smet's physical ailments, and the one which finally proved fatal, was a form of Bright's disease which, in its later stages, was accompanied by severe hemorrhages. By 1867 this malady was already giving him great trouble, and he notes in the fall of that year, after a severe spell of sickness, that his weight had fallen off to 167 pounds. In Europe on his last journey he experienced an almost fatal attack and after his return to St. Louis in the spring of 1872 he did not again leave that city. He nevertheless kept very busy with the duties of his office and carried on a great deal of correspondence. Some of his best work dates from that period. He began and made some progress in a history of the Missouri Province which he hoped to see completed. During most of this time he held from the Government the privilege of nominating agents to be appointed for the tribes where Catholic missions were located.

The last letter ever written by Father De Smet, or at least the last one recorded, is dated May 12, 1873. On the next day Captain La Barge, who was perhaps at this time Father De Smet's most intimate personal friend, was


St. Stanislaus Novitiate, near Florissant, in 1847

BUILDINGS AT THE FLORISSANT GROUP.

going to launch a new steamboat which he had named *De Smet*. He besought Father De Smet to be present and bless the boat and at the same time visit his family. Though not at all well he did not feel like declining the request of his friend, particularly as the boat was named in his honor and was soon to visit those regions that he knew and loved so well.

Upon returning home in the evening he was taken quite ill and grew rapidly worse. His malady took a new form which necessitated an operation; and while it brought temporary relief, it made manifest the fact that death was not far away. On the 20th of May Father De Smet himself asked that the last sacraments be administered to him, and from that time on he lived only in prayer. The end came at a quarter after two on the morning of May 23, 1873.

The death of Father De Smet produced a deep grief in the city of St. Louis where he had made his home for almost exactly fifty years. His funeral was one of the most largely attended ever held in that city, and among the audience were many distinguished people. The funeral oration was pronounced by Monseigneur Ryan, Bishop Coadjutor of Monseigneur Kendrick, Archbishop of St. Louis, and was well worthy of its subject.[1] The press universally gave testimony of the high estimation in which the departed Jesuit was held.

Father De Smet was buried in the little cemetery of the Novitiate at Florissant, at the foot of the grave of Father Verhaegen, who had come to this place with him just fifty years before.

In the year 1878, on the fifth anniversary of Father De Smet's death, there was unveiled in Termonde, his native place, a fine statue of the great missionary. It is in bronze, designed by A. Frakin and executed by Charles Alker, director of the works at Haeren, Belgium. The height of the statue is thirteen feet six inches, and the weight of the bronze casting is 3,482 pounds. The base is carved from a single piece of blue limestone, with panels and suitable inscriptions on its four faces. The statue is considered a very satisfactory work, the artist having succeeded well in his attempt to portray the spirit of a great career. The missionary is represented in his priestly robes in the attitude of moving forward, with an eager expression on the face, as if intent upon the great work before him. In the right hand is a crucifix indicative of his calling as a priest of God, and in the other an olive branch, symbolic of his work as a peacemaker among the Indian tribes. Termonde was proud of her distinguished offspring, and Belgium, too, was proud of him; and he was fond of both.

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[1] See page 1592 of the *Letters*.

In bidding farewell to this august character in our national history, it is well to review some of the traits of his personality that marked it off from the average run of men. So far as it is in the power of man, in this network of temptation which we call life, by the constant exercise of religious faith and duty, to free his heart and conduct of all sin, Father De Smet succeeded. No one can read his life, even the inner secrets of it as recorded in his personal correspondence, without feeling that he is in the presence of a good man. There were narrow prejudices — prejudices that arose from his training and environment; but he had practically mastered his personal cravings, and looked with charity upon those who did him wrong. He has left us the remarkable statement that "no bitterness toward any one whomsoever ever entered my heart;" a statement, however, from which he would probably exclude certain political organizations which aroused all the hatred that a heart like his was capable of.

He was of a genial and buoyant temperament, fond of jest and merriment, and humorously disposed. "I am naturally inclined to laughter," he once said, and even the staid formalities of the Indian councils so provoked his mirth at times that he had hard work to keep a sober countenance. He was as willing to tell a joke on himself as on any one else and evidently took a keen relish in depicting the awkward plights in which his varied experiences often placed him. Here is an example: "One day I found myself in a singular and critical position. In attempting to pass under a tree that inclined across the path, I perceived a small branch in form of a hook, which threatened me. The first impulse was to extend myself upon the neck of my horse. Unavailing precaution! It caught me by the collar of my surtout, the horse still continuing his pace. Behold me suspended in the air, struggling like a fish at the end of a hook. Several respectable pieces of my coat floated, in all probability, a long time in the forest, as a proof of my having paid toll in passing through it. A crushed and torn hat, an eye black and blue, two deep scratches on the cheek, would, in a civilized country, have given me the appearance of a bully issuing from the *Black Forest*, rather than of a missionary."

The distressing experience of sickness at sea always appealed to the funny side of his nature. He suffered as much in this respect as any of his fellow travelers, but he always made light of it (in more senses than one) and his letters abound in amusing descriptions of the manner in which Neptune collected the tax which he levied upon all who trespassed upon his domain.

Sometimes, in a quiet way to his close associates, he imparted his views upon the well-intentioned, yet often misdirected charity, to which he was subject as procurator of the missions. He once wrote to a friend in Paris:

* * * "Mademoiselle Therese de Coppens, in her little letter, announces that she has forwarded to me an alb and sundry other objects for the missions. I have known the excellent good demoiselle for many years past; there can be no doubt that she has the best intentions in the world. I will do as you advise about writing her a little note of thanks. * * * At the same time, I beg that you will

look into her shipment, or have somebody else do so, with my permission to take out anything that you may judge unsuitable or not worth the freight. Once, a few years ago, as I was leaving for Havre, Mademoiselle sent me a big package for America. I opened it up in Paris, and what do you think there was in it? Nothing but old rags, frightful images of saints, daubed with colors, exactly in the taste of the Blackfeet and Crows of the Rocky Mountains, and finally some German holy virgins and christs, which would really scare a man and make him laugh at the same time. I left the whole thing in Paris. In regard to these things, follow your own discretion, and do just as you think best."

He was very fond of good stories, and while he naturally did not indulge much in that line in his formal writings on missionary matters, a good many crept into his personal correspondence and some of them are given in the present edition of his writings.[2]

The cheerfulness and optimism of his temperament were united with the deepest sentiments of tenderness and affection. He was moved to tears as easily as a woman, and all his life long it was his natural manner to "rejoice with those that do rejoice and weep with those that weep."

He possessed in an eminent degree those qualities that go to the making of a home, and one cannot but feel that the world, in gaining a good priest, lost a better husband and father. He was passionately fond of his family in Belgium and his letters to his brothers, nephews and nieces breathe the tenderest affection. He was always impatient for letters from them. "Exilement, even when it is voluntary," he once wrote, "or when, rather, it is imposed by conscience or religion, cannot destroy in a man's heart the sweet sentiments there implanted by kinship or love of country. Hence the vacancy that I feel within me, at not having received for so long a time any of your letters, always so good and interesting, and so consoling to your American exile."

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[2] See page 1416 of the *Letters*.

His priestly duties did not estrange him from the natural feelings that home and kindred inspire and he was ever alive to the pleasures and sorrows of his relatives across the sea. He thus wrote to one of his nieces upon the occasion of her marriage: "Since I now love my nephew, Mr. De Bare, as much as I love my niece Sylvie, you must be careful to give him a faithful description of your uncle, so that if I should happen in on him in your absence, he could recognize me without ever having seen me. Uncle Pierre, tell him, is a man of medium size, with gray hair, tending to white. The center of his wide face is occupied by a nose with which a Greek or a Roman would not find much fault. Its nearest neighbor is a mouth of ordinary size, which hardly ever opens save to laugh or to make others laugh; it makes people love the good Lord in that manner. The rest resembles a man of fifty years, who weighs 210 pounds. If ever you build a new house, give the door of my chamber six inches extra width, because I don't like to be bothered in getting into a room."

His friends at home likewise held him in the highest veneration and affection and a close and uninterrupted correspondence passed between them. On one of his visits to Europe, he officiated at the marriage of his nephew Paul with whom he had corresponded since he was a little boy. The church where the ceremony was performed was thronged with people eager to see the great missionary, and the scene is described as deeply touching and impressive.

These little glimpses of his inner life show how much of human nature he possessed, and how little it had been warped or withered by a calling which we are inclined to think sets men apart from the common run of humanity.

Father De Smet would have made a successful man of affairs and an ideal citizen in public life. The Society kept him constantly engaged in managing the business affairs of the Province; and his extensive travels at home and abroad gave him an acquaintance with men in all the walks of life which very few members of his order possessed. He was richly endowed by nature with what he calls "that most precious of social virtues, common sense." Although throughout his life he was thrown in contact with the world above the lot of the average priest, and in places where indiscretion would have cost him dear, he always bore himself in a way that won the respect and confidence of those who met him. He held rigidly aloof from politics even when his soul was aroused by the persecutions carried on against his religion. Referring, late in life, to his past career, he once wrote: "In my long missionary career of over thirty years I have made it a rule not to lend myself or interfere in any difference that may occur between parties. I try my best to attend solely to my spiritual ministry for the welfare of my white brethren and that of the well-disposed Indians."

A feature of Father De Smet's career which has strongly appealed to the author since he first became acquainted with the life-work of the great missionary is the absence of that longing for martyrdom which was so characteristic of the old Canadian missionaries. Apart from one's admiration of the wonderful fortitude that enabled Brebeuf and others to endure calmly the tortures of the savages, we cannot but feel that it was lost upon the barbarous nature of the savage and did not promote the cause of religion in any adequate degree. There is an involuntary feeling that these men would have better served their Master if they had made themselves soldiers of the cross, literally, and had met their savage assailants with sword and fire instead of meekly resigning themselves to a terrible and ineffectual fate. This, we are aware, is not the view of the Church, and it may be that, in the inscrutable wisdom of Providence, sacrifices like these bring about results which we are unable to trace.

Father De Smet was a different kind of man. He did not lack courage — he faced death too many times for that; but he believed that the life given him was given for a purpose, and that it should not be lightly thrown away. He always took the most careful precautions against disaster. He could even practice the legitimate deceptions of war when necessary to frustrate the plans of an enemy. While he never himself carried arms — or at least we have no record that he did — he aided his traveling companions in their means of defense, and would undoubtedly have helped them in battle if the necessity had arisen.

But when it came to situations where the sacrifice of his life might promote the welfare of others, he did not hesitate. Three times, at least, he went forth to meet hostile bands when it was believed that a white man could not approach them without certain death. And he informs us that he did this in perfect calmness and with a sense of security which could come only from his faith in the protecting care of Providence. It is a singular fact that in all his experience in the Indian country, during the period of general wars, he saw very little, if any, actual bloodshed. In 1846 he said, "I have never witnessed the shedding of one drop of human blood" — and the same good fortune accompanied him during the remainder of his life.

It is entirely in harmony with a nature like that of Father De Smet, that he should be an enthusiastic lover of the beauties of Nature. Whether on sea or land, among the mountains or on the prairie, he saw beauty and goodness in all that God had made. His writings are full of his observations upon these subjects. He tells us, for instance, how on one occasion, when nearing New York from Europe, a long spell of rough weather was followed by a perfect day in which everything combined to make Nature appear at her best. There was a glorious sunset which drew from Father De Smet the exquisite reflection that the setting of the sun at sea is "among the great wonders of the Lord." He sat up that night until two in the morning, drinking in this natural elixir of life, and was up again in time to see the rising of a May sun. This is the way it appeared to him: "The sky was clear, the sea was tranquil, hardly a ripple stirred the surface of its waters, and from its bosom rose the majestic sun in all its lustre and glory, spreading and reflecting its dazzling beams, high and deep, above and below the horizon. Eastwardly the ocean appeared as in a blaze and resembled a boundless mass of molten gold. Truly, grand and sublime is the sight of the rising sun at sea."

He once wrote to a young student friend of poetic talent who was about to pass by Niagara Falls: "Take a peep at the great Niagara Falls; look well at them. No matter how much your mind may have been dried up by the holy fathers, by theology and philosophy, your poetic turn will there revive and feel a new inspiration."

Reference has already been made to the personal appearance of Father De Smet; but it is well to add here that there was that about his bearing and physiognomy, growing out of his religious life, which added vastly to the favorable impression produced by his well-developed physique. Father De Smet was particularly noted for the dignity and suavity of his manner, and the Christian character of his countenance. "His face was a benediction," once said a distinguished Montana pioneer who knew him well;[3] and another pioneer,[4] who had traveled with him part way across the continent, characterized him as "genial, of fine presence, and one of the saintliest men I have ever known, and I cannot wonder that the Indians were made to believe him divinely protected. He was a man of great kindness and great affability under all circumstances; nothing seemed to disturb his temper."

Having now noted the general traits of Father De Smet's character as a man and priest, we shall notice some of the more prominent phases of his life-work.

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[3] Colonel W. F. Sanders of Helena, Mont.

[4] John Bidwell in *The Century* for November, 1890

CHAPTER XI.

THE INDIAN AND THE MISSIONARY.

A friend of the Indians — Their trust in him — Interesting intercourse with the tribes — The Indian Question — Missionary work — Comparison of Protestant and Catholic methods — Great obstacles to success — The destruction of the field by white settlement.

THERE has never lived a more sincere, ardent and practical friend of the Indians than Father De Smet. He held them in the deepest affection. He sympathized with them in the wrongs they suffered. At the same time he saw their limitations; he hated their revolting uncleanliness, abhorred their cruelties, and hesitated not to point out to them the evils of their manner of life. With all of Catlin's enthusiasm for the native character, he had none of those impracticable and chimerical notions which made that writer wholly unreliable as an authority, and his plans impossible of realization.

As Father De Smet was a friend of the Indians to an extent never equaled by any other white man, so there was never another white man for whom they felt the deep personal affection and absolute trust that they did for him. Nothing is more remarkable in his eventful life than this fact. He had but to show himself to win their hearts. There was that in his benevolent manner that commanded their trust in an instant. They delighted to honor him. He was borne in triumph or escorted with imposing ceremony; given their best lodge; feasted until endurance could receive no more. And as years rolled on and they found him always true, their first impressions grew into a worshipful love. He was the only white man, they were wont to say, who never talked to them with a forked tongue.

His interviews with them were full of exquisite incidents, and he knew perfectly how to impress their minds with the wonders of life and pave the way to the reception of religious truth. "In their hunting expeditions," he once wrote, "I used to pass the beautiful summer and autumnal evenings seated on the grass and flowery meadows of their lovely mountain valleys surrounded by my dear neophytes. They took the liveliest interest in my narratives of the holy writ — on the creation, the deluge, the ark of Noah, the Maccabees, Samson, Joseph and his brethren, etc. I occasionally entertained them on American and European events and wars, on Washington and his great country, on the battles of Napoleon the First, his struggles and his final overthrow at Waterloo."

His intercourse with that wild and roving tribe of freebooters, the Crows, was always interesting. We have noted the astonished remark of a Crow chief when he found what had to be done to inherit the white man's heaven. On a subsequent occasion the good Father explained to them the greatness of the white nation. "They asked me innumerable questions; among others they wished to know the number of the whites. 'Count,' I replied, 'the blades of grass upon your immense plains, and you will know pretty nearly the number of whites.' They all smiled, saying that the thing was impossible, but they understood my meaning. And when I explained to them the vast extent of the villages inhabited by white men (New York, Philadelphia, London, Paris); the grand lodges (houses) built as near each other as the fingers of my hand, and four or five piled up, one above the other (meaning the different stories of our dwellings); when I told them that some of these lodges (speaking of churches and towers) were as high as mountains and large enough to contain all the Crows together; that in the grand lodge of the national council (the Capitol at Washington) all the great chiefs of the whole world could smoke the calumet at their ease; that the roads in these great villages were always filled with passengers, who came and went more thickly than the vast herds of buffalo that sometimes cover their beautiful plains; when I explained to them the extraordinary celerity of those moving lodges (the cars on the railroad) that leave far behind them the swiftest horse, and are drawn along by frightful machines whose repeated groanings re-echo far and wide, as they belch forth immense volumes of fire and smoke; and next those fire canoes (steamboats) which transport whole villages, with provisions, arms and baggage, in a few days, from one country to another, crossing large lakes (the seas), ascending and descending the great rivers and streams; when I told them that I had seen white men mounting up into the air (in balloons) and flying with as much agility as the warrior eagle of their mountains — then their astonishment was at its height; and all placing their hands upon their mouths, sent forth at the same time one general cry of wonder. 'The Master of Life is great,' said the chief, 'and the white men are his favorites.'"

Then he spoke to them of religion. They had dimly heard of the white man's prayer and wanted to hear how he addressed the Great Spirit. Father De Smet planted three United States flags near by; called the multitude around him, knelt beneath the ensign of his country and intoned the solemn canticles and repeated the prayers of the Church, and had them interpreted. These things made a deep impression, and the Crows, like every other tribe whom he visited, always remembered them.

Apart from the bearing of these incidents upon his religious work, Father De Smet thoroughly enjoyed this contact with the unsophisticated children of the wilderness. It was always fresh and novel, no matter how often repeated; and every new repetition evolved some new feature. It was his compensation for the hardships of savage life, so intolerable to a cultured taste. He refers again and again to the feasts to which he was subjected — the disgusting cookery and repulsive food, and he marveled that human beings could live in that way. "The stomach of the Indian has always been a riddle to me," he said; and it required all his ingenuity to devise ways and means of escaping this form of lavish hospitality without doing offense to his hosts.

The great Indian Question absorbed his thoughts perhaps more than any other. He understood it perfectly, and constantly deplores in his letters the terrible position in which the Indian was placed by the encroachment of the whites. It was the same hard question which had been wrestled with in vain since the settlement of the country began — what is to become of the Indian? It mattered comparatively little so long as they were east of the Mississippi, for they could be moved to the vast areas of the West. But now they were all there and the white man kept coming. Back and still farther went the buffalo and the Indian with him. It could not last forever, and Father De Smet saw with unerring vision the fate that must soon overtake them. That it came sooner than he expected is only because no one foresaw how rapidly settlement would occupy the West. The discovery of gold was the knell of the red man. Like a mighty flood, emigration swept over the plains and filled the mountains. Father De Smet had known of gold in the mountains since 1842, and had kept his discovery a secret because he knew that its revelation meant the practical extinction of Indian life in the West. It was yet twenty years before it should become generally known; but when it came it swept all before it. Father De Smet crossed the mountains from the Columbia to Fort Benton in 1859 just before the discovery, and he went back by the same route in 1863 in the midst of the process of discovery. The change was astonishing and ominous. He wrote on this occasion: "One cannot help being anxious for the fate of the Indians on account of the approach of the whites. The treasures concealed in the heart of the mountains will attract thousands of miners from every land; and with them will come the dregs of civilization, gamblers, drunkards, robbers and assassins."

It would be easy to state from Father De Smet's writings every possible phase of the Indian question; but we will give only a few references. The general course of events by which the Indian was compelled to never-ceasing retreat before the advance of the white man is thus described:

"Since the discovery of America a system of extermination, of moving the Indians, thrusting them further back, has been pursued and practiced by the whites, little by little at first, more and more as the European settlers multiplied and gained strength. At this day this same policy is marching with giant strides; the drama of spoliation has reached its last act, both east and west of the Rocky Mountains. The curtain will soon fall upon the poor and unhappy remnants of the Indian tribes, and they will henceforth exist only in history."

And how this irresistible process drove them to desperation and war with all its savage horrors is thus set forth:

"The unhappy war which is now raging so fiercely over all the extent of the Great Desert east of the Rocky Mountains has, like so many other Indian wars, been provoked by injustices and misdeeds on the part of the whites and even the agents of the Government. For years and years they have deceived the Indians with impunity in the sale of their lands, and by the embezzlement, or rather open theft, of immense sums paid by the Government therefor. The Indians, driven to extremity, after being swindled and robbed through a long series of years, and unable to obtain any justice against their oppressors, utter at last their terrible war cry against the whole race of the enemy."

Here follows a statement, replete with wisdom, of the situation as it appeared to thoughtful observers when our Sioux wars were at their height. Its exoneration of the Government from complicity in the wrongs practiced upon the Indians is an example of broad-mindedness which one does not often meet with among the so-called "friends" of the redmen.

"In order to form a just idea of their critical position, and of the melancholy consequences which will be the result unless restrained by special protection of divine Providence, imagine two societies coming in contact, one representing the manners and customs of barbarians, the other all the splendor of modern civilization. How many years will elapse before there will be a perfect fusion between the two societies, before unison will exist, before they can dwell together in complete harmony? Neither the first, nor the second, nor the third generation, notwithstanding untiring efforts, will achieve that happy result, such as it is understood in our days. Hence, previous to a perfect fusion between the societies, the civilized society will have the advantage over the barbarous; it will have it entirely at its mercy, to make it subservient to its will and pleasure. In a word, the barbarian can no better sustain himself in the presence of civilization, than the simplicity of childhood can contest against the malicious prudence of mature age.

"This, in my opinion, is what will be realized in the Great Desert, when the copper-colored race shall come into contact with the white. The judgment of the savage is not sufficiently ripe to be able to compete with the wisdom of man born in the bosom of civilization. It is this conviction which fills us with anxiety for the future of our dear neophytes in the different missions. We confide solely in divine goodness, which, we hope, will not fail to come to the help of His children.

"It is not difficult to descry from afar the grand event which must engulf in one common wreck all the Indian tribes. The storm which has just burst forth over their heads was long preparing; it could not escape the observing eye. We saw the American Republic soaring, with the rapidity of the eagle's flight, towards the plenitude of her power. Every year she adds new countries to her limits. She ambitions nothing less than extending her dominion from the Atlantic to the Pacific, so as to embrace the commerce of the whole world, and dispute with other mighty nations the glory of pre-eminence. Her object is attained. All bend to her sceptre; all Indian nationality is at her feet.

"Far be it from us, however, to accuse the noble Republic of injustice and inhumanity in her late treaties. It seems to us, on the contrary, that no nation has ever furnished more means of civilization. If any one must be blamed on this point, it is rather private persons, new colonists, who act and place themselves in direct opposition with the good intentions of the Government in behalf of the savages."

But while he recognized that the change must come, he deplored the fact that it must be so harsh and accompanied with so much of injustice and wrong. He did all he could to soften the cruelty of it and he always advised the Indians to submit to the Government and not incur its displeasure. His greatest grief was that, in giving this advice, which was followed on more than one occasion, he was compelled to see the promises made them unfulfilled and his advice lead ever to new suffering. The Government, always a friend to the Indian, was weak in the execution of its laws and treaties with them. Exactly there was the fault — that it did not enforce the fulfillment of its promises. There is no more impressive scene in our Indian history than Father De Smet's visit to Sitting Bull's band in 1868. To the Indians he was the representative of truth, the Great Father in Washington that of falsehood. When they saw the banner of Father De Smet they first thought it the flag of the United States and would have massacred every white man in the party; but when they saw it to be the simple emblem of Christ, borne by the valiant missionary, their hatred changed to joy and their hostile attitude to the most enthusiastic friendliness. It was the faithlessness of the Great Father in his promises to them that embittered their minds and called forth all that was savage in their nature.[1]

The Indians revered and loved Father De Smet to the last. They were always looking for him to return among them. From every tribe in the northwest he received petitions to have a black-robe sent them, and whenever he passed through their country in later years it was like a triumphal march. They came to see him and pour out their grievances and to have their children baptized. All in all their love and veneration for this man present one of the most touching spectacles in the history of the native races in America.

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[1] "Commissioners and agents of the Government come to us every year. They are affable and prodigal of words and promises on behalf of our Great Father. What is the reason that so many fine words and pompous promises always come to nothing, nothing, nothing."

Father De Smet planned his work among the Indians on a far greater scale than he was able ever to realize. This was due in the first place to lack of resources. The Jesuits never had either the workers or the funds that were necessary. In the second place the field itself was entirely swept away. In 1846 Father De Smet no doubt anticipated that the seed he had sown in Oregon would grow into a mighty harvest. But what man proposes is rarely realized. In 1863, as he passed over the country again, he found it occupied by a new race, the hunting grounds of his neophytes filled with settlers; the Indians struggling in vain for their lands and being rapidly huddled together on small reservations. The whole opportunity for a great work had gone in the twinkling of an eye. The work of the missionary among the Indians was confined to a few small localities whose influence upon the general community was wholly inappreciable.

This is not saying that their work so far as it went was not a success. There is no finer example of an Indian mission than St. Ignatius in Montana; but a few individual successes were not a vast field. The truth is the Indian was gone, swallowed up in the flood of settlement, and no longer a factor in the life of that country.

It is a reasonable conclusion from the history of the Catholic missions in Oregon, that if the Indians had remained in a state of primitive wildness, the missionaries would have accomplished their conversion to the Christian religion; and that, without interfering with their native customs to any great extent, they would have lessened the wars among the tribes, promoted cleanliness and virtue among them, and at the same time have left them free in the exercise of all their manly sports, the chase, the nomadic life, and the gathering of furs by which their conveniences and comforts could be promoted through trade with the white man.

As a missionary force among the Indians there is no doubt of the superiority of the Catholic method. It appealed to the Indians, they liked it, and they had greater confidence in the black-robes than in Protestant ministers. The reasons for this are numerous and convincing, but chiefly two: (1) The sublime and exalted forms of Catholic worship appealed to the imagination of the Indian and he was attracted by them where abstract preaching made no impression.

(2) The black-robe came to the Indian unfettered by outward ties. His life was devoted solely to his calling. Poverty was his portion and no suspicion could exist that his devotion to his work was tainted with motives of self-aggrandizement. He was without wife or children and there was nothing to come between him and his work. His very personality was separate and distinct from that of ordinary men and he came to be universally known among the Indians as the "*robe noire*" or "black gown."

The Protestant clergyman came under different auspices. He had no distinguishing dress that marked him off in his calling. His personal appearance was like that of other white men who cheated and deceived them. The minister brought his wife and children who must needs come first in his heart. Then he taught more by abstract methods and devoted little time to those forms and ceremonies which appealed with peculiar power to the childlike mind of the Indian.

From these and other causes, the choice of the Indian, whenever he had means of acquaintance with both parties, was always for the black-gown, and there is no doubt that the Catholics were the most successful missionaries among the Indian tribes.[3] It was a deep grief to Father De Smet in the closing years of his life, when called to Washington for consultation about the apportionment of the missions among different religious bodies, that the Indians were not consulted at all, but the missions were parceled out on a wholly different basis. It was then that he saw his great work, cut down as it already was by the influx of settlers, practically swept away.[3]

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[3] "You are aware that I have filled the office of agent of the United States Government among the Indians for fifteen years. During all

Father De Smet made a profound study of the Indian character as it related to his missionary work among them. He never sought to minimize or conceal the natural difficulties in the way. In a long letter written late in life he reviews the whole question in an exhaustive manner.[4] From this most valuable essay one readily discovers that he did not then view the subject with the same enthusiasm as thirty years before. In his early work, fortune threw him among a tribe which above all others was susceptible to religious teaching. They received him with a sincere desire to learn his religion, and everything then looked as if the field had only to be occupied to become permanently fruitful. His

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this time I have noticed with the greatest interest that the efforts made by good Christians to establish missions and schools, to instruct the Indians in spiritual and temporal matters, have contributed the most to civilizing and pacifying them. Furthermore, I take pleasure in testifying that the Catholic Church, to which you belong, has everywhere obtained the most pre-eminent success. The Catholic missionaries have always succeeded in gaining the Indian's hearts, in controlling their brutal outbreaks and ameliorating their condition in every respect." Letter from Alfred Vaughan, Indian agent, to Father De Smet.

[3] "I have been called to Washington by the Secretary of the Interior, where a great council has been held on Indian affairs in general. I then learned that forty-three Indian stations were to be divided among different denominations in the various sections of the country inhabited by the Indians, of which only four are assigned to the Catholics, viz: One in Dakota (the mission we intend to establish in the spring among the Sioux), one in New Mexico, another in Montana (Flathead) and a fourth in Idaho. *In the whole of this affair the Indians have not been consulted as to the religion they desired to belong to.*" Father De Smet, 1870.

[4] See page 1062 of the *Letters.*

great confidence at that time is shown in the following extract from his letters: "How consoling it is to pour the regenerating waters of baptism on the furrowed and scarred brows of these desert warriors,— to behold these children of the plains and forests emerging from that profound ignorance and superstition in which they have been for so many ages enveloped; to see them embrace the faith and all its sacred practices with an eagerness, an attention, a zeal, worthy the pristine Christians."

But all the Indians were not like the Flatheads, and the problem grew in complexity as the good missionary's experience increased. He found the Indians a fickle people. It was hard for them to stick to a thing, particularly when it ran counter to their immemorial customs. Their religious beliefs and social ethics were very different from those of Christian peoples. It was not a lack of intellectual capacity nor of a susceptibility to religious teachings that stood in the way; but the inertia of long-established customs. It was therefore Father De Smet's conclusion that the full "conversion of these poor heathens is the work of the Lord, for it implies the entire regeneration of the adult Indian which would be next to a miracle of grace."

There were other obstacles to missionary success among the Indians which are thus stated by Father De Smet: "The principal ones are the immoderate use of strong drink, polygamy, superstitious practices and prejudices, a language very difficult to acquire, and their inclination to a wandering life. This inclination is so strong that they become melancholy and morose if they stay three months in the same place."

We have several times referred to Father De Smet's work in providing ways and means for carrying on the missions. One important resource which was available for many years ought to be referred to. The American Fur Company gave the missionaries free transportation, both for passengers and freight, on the company's boats plying the Missouri river. It was a most valuable contribution, for which the Jesuits were indebted to Charles P. Chouteau, to whom Father De Smet refers in his letters as a benefactor of the missions. After the American Fur Company withdrew from the upper river the same privilege was occasionally enjoyed at the hands of Captain Joseph La Barge, Father De Smet's personal friend.

CHAPTER XII.

VIEWS UPON PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

Father De Smet an active observer of public events — The growth of the United States — Its future — The Oregon Question — The anti-Catholic movement — The radical party — The Test Oath in Missouri.

FATHER DE SMET was an interested observer of public affairs and of the progress of his adopted country. His letters to his European correspondents are full of references to these subjects. In regard to the growth of the United States he held the most enthusiastic views, and often expressed his wonder and admiration at the marvelous result developing under his eyes. A few examples of the way in which he represented this new nation to his friends in the Old World are given here: "I have said in Europe, and I repeat it, there is no country in the world that has greater resources than this; none that is making such progress; where everything is developing in so wonderful a manner as to draw the admiration of the civilized world. Providence has laid out this country on a gigantic scale; its destiny is to march onward, and no power on earth can stop it. It is a mighty country, young and vigorous, and possesses a vast space which time will fill with millions of men."

The vast extent of the United States appealed powerfully to his imagination: "I shall never forget," he once wrote, "the rapture of a traveler who left the green parks of New Orleans early in March — that land of the orange and the olive, then teeming with verdure, freshness and life, and, as it were, mocking him with the midsummer of his own northern home. He journeyed leisurely toward the region of ice and snow, to watch the budding of the young flowers and to catch the breezes of spring. He crossed the Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne and he ascended the Big Tombigbee in a comfortable steamboat. From Tuscaloosa he shot athwart the wilds of Alabama, over Indian grounds that bloody battles have rendered memorable. He traversed Georgia and the Carolinas, ranged along the base of the mountains of Virginia; and for three months more he enjoyed one perpetual, unvarying, ever-coming, spring — that most delicious season of the year — till, by the middle of June, he found himself in the fogs of the Passamaquoddy where tardy summer was even then hesitating whether it was time to come. And yet he had never been off the soil of his own country! The flag that he saw on the summit of the fortress on the lakes near New Orleans was like that which floated from the staff on the hills of old Fort Sullivan, in the easternmost extremity of Maine; and the morning gun that startled his slumbers among the rocky battlements of the Bay of Fundy, was not answered till many minutes after on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, and hours after on the shores of the Bay of San Francisco in California."

The political unity of the United States appeared to him quite as wonderful as its territorial extent. "What nation on earth presents such a spectacle as the United States of North America of a confederated government over such a vast extent of territory so complicated, with so many varied interests, and yet moving so harmoniously? I went within the walls of the Capitol at Washington, and there, under the star-spangled banners that wave amid its domes. I found the representatives of thirty States — nations, in many senses, they may be called — that have within them each the germ of a greater people than many of the proud, now tottering, principalities of Europe; all speaking or learning the same language, all acting with one heart and all burning with the same enthusiasm — the love and glory of this great Republic."

The "manifest destiny" of this nation, as arbiter of the political fortunes of the Western Hemisphere, did not escape him. "I have seen an old geographical chart," he wrote a friend, "which shows the eagle soaring in the air above the great extent of North America, with the numerous islands adjacent to both coasts. He is casting a penetrating and greedy look over the vast Canada and all its dependencies, and his open beak seems ready to snatch them up. All those immense regions of which the United States occupy the center rest under his shadow. His fine widespread tail covers all of Mexico and the adjoining regions as far as the Gulf of Darien and the Bay of Panama; and the tips of his wings are dipped in the two oceans beyond San Domingo and the Sandwich Islands. And that is the grand future, perhaps not far off, to which the great American Republic aspires, and which she will attain if she is wise."

Many pages might be quoted from his letters to show how well he foresaw the future development of the West, but the following brief reference must suffice: "Are these vast and innumerable fields of hay forever destined to be consumed by fire, or perish in the autumnal snows? How long shall these superb forests be the haunts of wild beasts? And these inexhaustible quarries, these abundant mines of coal, lead, sulphur, iron, copper and saltpetre — can it be that they are doomed to remain forever undeveloped? Not so. The day will come, etc."

It was quite natural, considering Father De Smet's intimate acquaintance with the Columbia Valley, that he should take an active interest in the Oregon Question. Like his co-worker in those parts, Doctor Marcus Whitman,[1] he wanted to see this region fall into the hands of the United States. He was thrown a great deal with the

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[1] Father De Smet and Marcus Whitman are the most distinguished names in the history of Protestant and Catholic missionary work in Oregon. There is now in possession of George H. Himes of Portland, Oregon, a "Douay Bible," dated "Belfast, 1839," with the following inscription in Father De Smet's hand: "Presented to Dr. M. Whitman by P. J. De Smet."

British traders, and they were not altogether discreet in setting forth their schemes of empire on the Pacific slope. It aroused Father De Smet's indignation that such things should be going on and his country not bestir itself. He did not like the comparison of our lethargy with the activity of Great Britain, and a little incident serves to show us that he did not conceal his opinion.

In 1845 he met on the upper Columbia two engineer officers of the British army on their way to the mouth of that stream. After a brief interchange of courtesies and news each party went on its way; but Father De Smet had observed enough to set him thinking, and he placed his reflections upon record:

"I received with gladness the recent news from Europe, but the Oregon Question seemed to me somewhat alarming; for it was not curiosity or pleasure that had led these two officers to cross the ocean and so many desert wastes and that was hastening their course toward the mouth of the Columbia. They were under orders from their Government to take possession of Cape Disappointment, to unfurl the flag of England and to build a fort there in order to control the entrance to the river. In the Oregon Question John Bull, without talking too much, goes straight to the point and seizes the most important strategical sites in the country. Uncle Sam, on the other hand, wastes his time in words, fumes and threatens. Years have passed in this way in debates and fruitless controversies, without a practical effort to secure his real or pretended rights in Oregon."

Father De Smet, on another occasion, furnished Senator Thomas H. Benton with a report of a conversation which he heard among British naval officers, disclosing an official intention to take possession of Oregon.[2]

But while Father De Smet was an enthusiastic believer in the future material greatness of his country, he had

[2] See page 486 of the *Letters*.

many misgivings about its moral and religious destiny. This arose almost entirely from the hostile feeling that prevailed extensively throughout the country at a certain period against the Roman Catholic religion. The crusade against the Church — for it practically amounted to that — attained its greatest power during the existence of the so-called Know-nothing party, between 1850 and 1860. This ephemeral organization, characteristic of the nervous energy of a rapidly developing country, was founded in 1852. It was at first a secret, oath-bound, political fraternity, whose object it was to exclude aliens from office. It was the first formidable expression of public alarm at the rapid influx of immigrants and the growth of Roman Catholicism in the United States. Opposition to the extension of slave power was another of its tenets. When it entered the political arena, it did so under the name of the American Party, and its motto was, "Americans must rule America." It was popularly known as the Know-nothing party, because, in its earlier history, its members, when questioned about the doings of their organization, answered "I don't know." In 1854 it carried several northern states, including New York, and in 1856 elected thirty-two "American" governors. In the latter year it ran a candidate for the presidency, but carried the electoral vote of only one state, Maryland. Thereafter its fortunes rapidly declined and by 1860 it had practically passed out of existence.

During the active history of this organization public feeling against the Roman Catholics ran high and in many cases amounted to outrageous persecution, wholly inconsistent with the principle of religious liberty which is fixed in the foundation of our government. It made a deep and lasting impression upon Father De Smet, as we now know from his personal letters to his friends in Europe. We might quote at great length from his expressions upon this subject, some of which disclose a degree of bitterness quite as extreme as the persecution at which they were aimed. The following show the general tenor of all: "I cannot say much of the United States. This vast land, with all its advantages, must grow great and mighty, * * * but the American liberty and tolerance, so highly boasted, exist less in this great Republic than in the most oppressed country of Europe."

Here is another extract which shows to what a degree Father De Smet's vision was clouded by the sinister events of the time: "Let me say, *entre nous*, this country is marching rapidly toward anarchy. I dare say we are already there in some degree. Everything indicates that it will be preceded by a violent persecution of our holy religion. This Republic, where mobs are the order of the day, cannot long endure. Liberty here is a perversion of the word; it is license pure and simple. * * * Oh, little Belgium! She is truly free, prosperous and happy, because she is profoundly Catholic. Protestantism, in all its phases, has always been given to persecution."

At this period in his life, Father De Smet earnestly discouraged migration to America. As he saw the vast numbers of Catholics coming to these shores, and no possibility of supplying them with teachers, he felt that they could not long withstand the influence of Protestanism and that apostacy would exceed the number of conversions. He also advised some of his more intimate friends not to send their children here on account of the total change from the life to which they were accustomed. In Europe they were to a large degree born to their station in life. They would not work in well where boys commenced at the very foot of the ladder, doing the commonest service for the sake of getting a start. Their language would furthermore be against them until they could gain a command of English; and on the whole they would stand little show in competition with the universal adaptability of the American boy.

We have already noted Father De Smet'sattitude toward the questions of the Civil War. If he had taken any part in politics he would doubtless have been what was called a "War Democrat"—a Unionist, when it was a question of the unity of the country, but opposed to the extreme measures adopted by the Republicans at the close of the war. In his letters are several extended reviews of the causes of the war, which are generally judicious and enlightened. After the war came to a close, he became imbued with a fear of the radical element in the dominant party and looked upon its success as fraught with great danger to the Republic. He favored the milder policy of President Johnson toward the South and deprecated the hostility of Congress toward his reconstruction measures.

His feeling on these questions was doubtless largely controlled by the turn things took in the State of Missouri after the close of the war. The radical party for a time held control of the State and proceeded to extreme measures in order to perpetuate it. In 1865 a new constitution was adopted. The convention which drafted it was under the control of a few extremists. Among the more drastic features was the requirement of a test oath as condition precedent to voting, holding office, teaching school, preaching the gospel, solemnizing marriage, practicing law, sitting as a juror, or holding property in trust for any church, religious society or congregation. The principal condition of the oath was that the individual had never sympathized with or aided the South. There were some forty-five offenses that he must never have committed; and so sweeping were its provisions that no one could truthfully take it.

This provision of the new constitution was a failure almost from the start. The better sentiment of the community rebelled against it. Prominent men refused to be bound by it. Finally its validity was passed upon by the Supreme Court of the United States in January, 1867, and it was declared to be unconstitutional.

In one of his letters to friends in Europe, written while the test-oath was still in force, Father De Smet thus sets forth the attitude of his Church upon the question: "The old proverb says *sunt bona mixta malis,* and that is the case today in Missouri. Upon emerging from the war and at the beginning of the return of peace we find ourselves in fresh trouble and in a state of cruel uncertainty. This is the way of it. The radical party has installed itself, *per fas et nefas,* at the head of the state government. The new constitution, which has been adopted by a slender majority and which is publicly denounced as fraudulent, requires the clergy of all denominations, all professors of seminaries and colleges and all school teachers of either sex (including nuns) to take the following oath: 'that they have at no time in the past uttered a word nor sympathized in any manner in favor of the Rebellion,' etc. Preaching and performing the marriage ceremony are expressly forbidden to the clergy by this law.

"The priests are generally agreed that, on principle, such an oath cannot be taken, because our authority does not emanate from the state and we cannot, without compromising the ecclesiastical estate, consent to take it. No Catholic priest in Missouri will take it; the Protestant ministers have generally done so. The penalty for those who refuse to take this abominable *ex post facto* oath is a fine of $500 and imprisonment. The governor has announced in a speech 'that he has had the state prison enlarged and that the law shall be executed. If this cruel law is really enforced, our churches will have to be closed and our schools and colleges will be ruined."

Father De Smet naturally had little love for a political party capable of a *faux pas* like that and he looked with deep dread upon the prospect of Grant's election in 1868. He felt that the great general shared the Protestant antagonism to his Church, and that he could not withstand the more radical element in his party who would use his great authority among the people to further their extreme measures. When the election came and Grant uttered his famous manifesto, "Let us have peace," it lifted a heavy load from Father De Smet's mind and he hoped that every semblance of religious persecution would be purged from the politics of the country.

In all that we have said of Father De Smet's attitude on the subject of religious persecution, it should be borne in mind that it has come to us only through his private correspondence. He was always particularly careful not to enter in any way into political controversy, and no one could have told his real feelings nor their deep intensity. "I am keeping my mouth shut about politics," he wrote to a friend, "and I wish some of our other brethren would do the same." It is now a most interesting revelation to learn what the good priest thought on these disturbing questions; and to know how wisely he conducted himself, calmly waiting for the Providence on which he relied to bring all things to a just result.

CHAPTER XIII.

LITERARY WORK.

Description of the Missouri River — Father De Smet's map — Fauna and Flora — Indian history and traditions — Origin of Father De Smet's letters — Methods of writing — Unfounded aspersions — Literary records and data — The Linton album — Father De Smet's style — List of publications.

FATHER DE SMET'S writings are a distinct contribution to human knowledge. They abound in descriptions of the regions through which he passed, and although this information has been superseded by the more thorough work of later years, it served a useful purpose in its time. A particular example of his descriptive work is found in his notes upon the Missouri river, its tributaries, scenery, characteristics, navigation, etc. Very few, except pilots, knew that river as well as he, and they only knew its channel, while he was acquainted with its whole wonderful valley and with the wild inhabitants who occupied it. He had been at its very source in Red Rock lake on the Continental Divide and he had passed over every foot of its length except the distance between the Three Forks and Sun river in Montana. The information which he has left us on this subject will always possess a high historic value.

He made an early observation in regard to Great Salt lake which later researches have fully verified. "The lake, which is now only seventy miles long and thirty-five wide, probably filled, at a remote epoch, the whole valley. On all sides, on the slopes of the mountains, at a uniform height, are traces which water alone could have made." The Quaternary Lake Bonneville of the scientists filled a large part of the Great Basin and overflowed to the north into Snake river, making the watershed of the lake, geologically at least, a part of the Columbia Basin.

Father De Smet did a great deal of work in the line of map-making. He thus refers to this matter in one of his letters: "During the ten years I spent in the Indian country I occupied myself occasionally in drawing maps of the countries through which I passed. I availed myself of the best information I could obtain from trappers and intelligent Indians who were well acquainted with the mountain passes and the course of the rivers. Not having had instruments with me, the maps were necessarily only an approximation to the true positions." Before his death he gathered together into an ordinary stub-file all his manuscript maps. They are not executed with a degree of technical skill in draftsmanship to justify their reproduction; but they are extremely interesting and valuable historically. We may cite, as a single instance, that, although the Yellowstone Park country was not made known to the world until 1870, these maps, prepared before 1850, show nearly every feature of interest in that wonderful region.[1] In 1851 Father De Smet, at the request of D. D. Mitchell, drew a map of the western country for the Government, and it is now presumably on file in the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington.

The writings of Father De Smet are full of references to the fauna and flora of the country. There is not much original matter in these descriptions, and the changes in scientific nomenclature since they were written are so great that it is hardly worth while to attempt to utilize them. In a general way, however, there is a great deal of interest in his notes on the larger animals, such as the buffalo, beaver and bear, and the large space that these animals filled in the life of the Indian and of the early pioneers.

The fund of Indian lore contained in the *Letters* has permanent value. It includes descriptions of the manners and customs of the Indians, their traditions and notable exploits, comments upon their intellectual and spiritual nature, and a great variety of other subjects. The history of the native races of North America can never be fully written without consulting the writings of Father De Smet.

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[1] See pages 182 and 661 of the *Letters*.

Coming now to the vehicle by which Father De Smet transmitted to the public the information he had collected, it remains to note the most important feature of his career, his literary work. The vast magnitude of this labor can best be judged by the bulk of material contained in the present edition of his letters. The industry and application necessary to produce such a result were prodigious; yet in spite of the great quantity of matter its quality was such as always to interest the reading public.

The primary purpose of his writings was to interest the Catholic public both in Europe and America in his missionary work and thus aid in securing the necessary funds for the missions. This duty fitted in perfectly with Father De Smet's natural tastes, for there is no doubt that he loved the work and would have achieved fame as a writer even without the specific motive above referred to. Concerning this primary motive Father De Smet has left the following definite statement: "I have been more or less engaged in the Indian missions for something like thirty years. The Reverend Father [General] Roothaan, of blessed memory, imposed it upon me as a duty to write very fully and to enter into minute details upon everything that concerned them — the diverse countries inhabited by the Indians, the manners, customs, beliefs, etc., of these strange and unfortunate tribes. My numerous letters, consisting of five volumes, bear witness that I have at least endeavored to discharge the duty laid upon me, and with humility and assurance, I hope that I can add that I have tried to do it faithfully. The present Very Reverend Father General encourages me by his letters to continue to give the details of my missionary labors year after year. All the superiors and provincials of Missouri have also called for them, and I have always been submissive to their requests in the spirit of obedience."

Nearly all of Father De Smet's writings are in the form of letters, published mainly in Europe where they would be most effective in securing generous aid for the missions. They were later translated in large part into English and published in the United States. These letters were extensively edited before publication, by Father De Smet's express request, and were shorn of whatever might possibly offend in America. They were not letters in the strict sense of the term, but careful dissertations, often addressed to several different parties, and they contain little of a personal character. The style bears evidence of this editorial revision. While it is more polished, particularly in the English translations, than in the genuine letters not written for publication, it has less of the freedom and vigor which were so characteristic of whatever Father De Smet said or did.

The correspondence of Father De Smet is in both French and English, with a line or two of vernacular Flemish (if writing to his family) whenever he was saying something that he did not want read if it fell into the wrong hands. He did not have a very perfect command of English. He was frequently mixed up on his tenses and occasionally on his prepositions and pronouns. He indulged in excessively long sentences, some of which are so involved that they cannot be disentangled except by breaking them up into separate parts. Yet in spite of these drawbacks there was a freshness, vigor and originality of expression that make his personal letters more attractive than those written expressly for publication.

Like all men who attain positions of prominence in the public eye, Father De Smet provoked the jealousy of inferior natures who were envious of a career which they could not equal. Elsewhere we have noted the accusations presented to the Father General at Rome concerning the subject-matter of Father De Smet's writings.

He was later accused of crookedness in regard to the purely literary features of his work. The nature of these charges is thus stated by Father De Smet: "For some years past I have been subjected to criticisms, often personal and malevolent, on the part of several German priests, who are saying in America, on the testimony of one or several fathers of your Province, that my name is only an assumed name in the letters which are printed and the books that are published afterwards bearing my name."

To Father De Smet's sensitive and guileless nature these false accusations brought genuine sorrow, as he could not understand why any human being should bear him ill-will on so slender a provocation. Nothing in the present editorial studies of his writings has been discovered that can give the slightest color to the charge, unless it be a single instance in which Father De Smet consulted a friend in preparing his reply to certain inquiries from Europe in regard to the Indian Question, and transmitted as his own his adviser's answers.[2]

In the last two or three years of his life, Father De Smet spent considerable time in collecting material for a history of the religious Province of Missouri. Here is a personal reference to this work: "Whilst confined to my room by sickness, I take great pleasure in my leisure moments in collecting whatever I can concerning the history of the Province. I have commenced at the beginning of our leaving Belgium in 1821, of our coming to Missouri in 1823, with all its traveling incidents and digging the first spadeful of earth on 31st of July, 1823, the feast day of St. Ignatius, of the Novitiate in Florissant. I have already written eighty pages from notes in the archives of the Province, from personal recollections, and from such other information as I am able to obtain."

Father De Smet did not live to complete this work, and even the partial narrative to which he refers is apparently lost.

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[2] See page 1208 of the *Letters*.

Father De Smet's methods of writing were those of any careful investigator. The following reference to his study of the Missouri river is a good example of all his work: "I spend my leisure hours in reading and taking notes upon the Missouri and its tributaries and upon the immense territory of 500,000 square miles that it drains. I investigate, I draw upon my own fund of information, and then I write." He drew from many sources, particularly the traders at the remote posts with most of whom he was on terms of close friendship. Among those whom we know to have furnished him information which found its way into his letters are Alexander Culbertson and E. T. Denig, distinguished traders of the American Fur Company, Zephyr Rencontre and Charles E. Galpin, interpreters, and Joseph La Barge, pilot. It was his constant habit to pick up information from every source available and jot it down for future use.

We have already referred to the great volume of Father De Smet's literary work. Considering the absence of extraneous mechanical aids which are now regarded as indispensable, as, for example, stenography and typewriting, the actual physical labor involved in his work appears incredible. Many of his longer letters were copied several times in his own hand, showing that in large degree he had to depend upon himself even for the purely mechanical labor of making necessary copies. He wrote a clear hand, and at times reduced it to a degree of fineness which is simply marvelous. The Jesuit training cultivated a fine hand, and the necessity of economy when paper was scarce and postage high accentuated the habit. To cite a single example, one of the letters is so finely written that a single page of ordinary letter size contains 1,231 words whereas a modern hand would fill it with from 150 to 250 words.

Father De Smet kept copies of nearly all his published letters and these are now scattered through several letter-books without any careful index. He apparently did not begin to keep copies of his personal letters until about

1850, but from that time on the file seems to be complete except of those letters written when he was in Europe. He preserved comparatively few of his letters received, or if he did, the files have been lost. All of the papers now known to exist are preserved in the archives of the St. Louis University.

One of these old records deserves more than a passing notice. It may be called the Linton Album from the name of the owner, though now it is a part of the Father De Smet papers. Dr. Moses L. Linton was for many years connected with the St. Louis University and was besides one of the prominent citizens of St. Louis.[a] In the course of his professional career one of his patients, a lady, made him a present of an album as "a souvenir of professional kindness." It was not an album to be devoted exclusively to the reception of pictures, but one to be written in, with frequent pages of a specially ornate character on which, presumably, matters of particular interest could be set down.

Dr. Linton devoted the present to a unique purpose the great importance of which he doubtless did not at the time fully realize. He gave it over to Father De Smet with the request that he would fill it with the record of his life. In carrying out this arrangement Father De Smet did nearly all the work with his own hand. The book is filled, in the most faultless writing, with a great variety of matters. There are Indian legends, poems, the Lord's Prayer in many different Indian dialects, and a variety of other interesting curiosities. It contains a complete account of the great work of 1868 which we have narrated elsewhere. Throughout the book are photographs and sketches, the most important being a series of water colors by one Matthew Hastings, an amateur artist of very pronounced merit. Some of these sketches, particularly those of the expedition of 1868, are of great historical value.

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[a] Dr. Moses Linton was born in Kentucky in 1812 and died in St. Louis June 1, 1872. His early education was partly under Catholic influence and he formally united with that church in 1841. He went to Europe to perfect his education and in 1842 became a member of the medical faculty of the St. Louis University, retaining the place until his death. He took an active interest in public affairs, and was a recognized force in the politics of his city and state.

But the most interesting and important feature of this album is the itinerary of Father De Smet's journeyings. He was a great traveler, and he early gained wide celebrity as such. He fell into the habit of keeping a record of the distances traveled each year and it finally became a matter of no little personal vanity. There are several photographs of himself on which he has written the years of his life since 1821 around the border with the distances traveled each year. There are in his letter books two other similar records. Considering the means of travel in the earlier years of Father De Smet's life the simple statement of 180,000 miles traveled gives an impressive idea of his untiring activity.

The album is a beautiful and costly book, in enameled covers and rich leaves of different tints, with ornamental pages scattered here and there. Father De Smet was proud of it and succeeded in making it a memento of rare value. Whenever he returned to St. Louis Dr. Linton would get him to bring it up to date. We find this reference to it among the *Letters:* "You ask me for a fresh letter, or rather for the continuation of my itinerary. For the last twelve years, at each of my returns to St. Louis, you have joyously placed your album upon my table. Each recurring sight of it has been a fresh pleasure, like the meeting of a familiar acquaintance, and immediately I have resumed my pen with gladness to lengthen out the old sketch with one more page." It is very rarely that a public character has left behind him so valuable a collection of personal data as this Linton Album contains.

Father De Smet indulged in verse a good deal and his efforts in this line are expressed in English, French and Latin. Some of his verse merits perusal, but it is evident that prose was the true medium for the expression of his thought. His prose style was simple and direct, and never monotonous. It is in many places overburdened with religious phraseology, and the frequent recurrence of the terms peculiar to the work of the Church detracts somewhat from its pleasure to the general reader. This trait is more apparent in the earlier letters intended for publication with a view to influencing missionary contributions, than in his later official and personal correspondence.

In his personal letters Father De Smet indulges in a great deal of pleasantry, as this was about the only opportunity in his order of life for the natural exuberance of his nature to find expression. Like other men he had his idiosyncrasies of style, one of which was a fondness for the use of a word under different meanings, often carrying the practice to an extreme length.

Finally all his literary work is characterized by a lofty sense of purity and honor, and there is little in it to which the most scrupulous taste could take exception. The uprightness of his life found expression in his writings and this is the highest encomium that can be bestowed upon them.[4]

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[4] The following is a list of the more important publications of Father De Smet's writings:

Published during his lifetime.

Pamphlet, by Father Verhaegen, entitled *The Indian Missions in the United States of America, under the Care of the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus.* Comprises 34 pages, 26 of which are devoted to two letters of Father De Smet's, one on the Potawatomi Mission and one giving a brief account of the 1840 Journey.

Letters and Sketches: with a Narrative of a Year's Residence Among the Indian Tribes of the Rocky Mountains. M. Fithian, 61 N. Second Street, Philadelphia, 1843.

French edition of the above, entitled *Voyages aux Montagnes-Rocheuses, et une Année de Séjour chez les Tribus Indiennes du Vaste Territoire de l'Orégon dépendant des Etats-Unis d'Amérique.* P. J. Hanicq, Malines, 1844.

Second French edition, entitled *Voyages aux Montagnes Rocheuses chez les Tribus Indiennes du Vaste Territoire de l'Orégon, Dependant des Etats-Unis d'Amérique.* Deuxième Edition. L. Lefort, Imprimeur-Libraire, Lille, 1850.

Dutch edition of the same, entitled *Reis naar het Rotsgebergte (Rocky Mountains), door Eerw. vader De Smet, Belgisch zendeling in de Vereenigde Staten.* J. W. Robijns en comp., Deventer; n. d.

German edition of the same, entitled *Reisen zu den Felsengebirgen und ein Jahr unter den Wilden Indianerstämmen des Oregon Gebietes.* St. Louis, 1865.

The preface to the *Western Missions and Missionaries* makes mention of a further edition in Italian, issued by Louis Prevete, Palermo, 1847.

Oregon Missions and Travels Over the Rocky Mountains, in 1845–46. Edward Dunigan, 151 Fulton-Street, 1847.

French edition of the above, entitled *Missions de l'Orégon et Voyages aux Montagnes-Rocheuses, aux Sources de la Colombie, de l'Athabasca et du Sascatshawin; pendant l'année 1845–46.* Ouvrage orné de 16 Gravures et de 3 Cartes. Il se vend au Profit de la Mission. Veuve Vander Schelden, Gand (1848).

Second French edition (a different translation) entitled *Missions de l'Orégon et Voyages dans les Montagnes-Rocheuses en 1845–46.* Ouvrage traduit de l'anglais par M. Bourlez. Librairie de Poussielgue-Rusand, Paris and J. B. Pélagand et Cie., Lyon, 1848.

Flemish edition of the same, entitled *Missien van den Orégon en Reizen naer de Rotsbergen en de Bronnen der Colombia, der Athabasca en Sascatshawin, in 1845–46.* Uit het fransch door een' kloosterling van Latrappe. Wwe. Vander Schelden, Onderstraet No. 37, Gent, 1849.

Voyage au Grand Desert en 1851. Imprimerie de J. Vandereydt, Bruxelles, 1853. Reprint of articles in the Précis Historiques.

Western Missions and Missionaries: a Series of Letters. James B. Kirker, late Edward Dunigan and Brother, 599 Broadway (up-stairs), New York, 1863.

Later editions from the same plates, with a defect on p. 334, are issued by P. J. Kenedy, Excelsior Catholic Publishing House, 5 Barclay Street, New York, n. d.

French edition of the same, entitled *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres.* Publiées par Revd. Edward Terwecoren de la Compagnie de Jésus. H. Casterman, Paris et Tournai, 1858.

New Indian Sketches. D. & J. Sadlier & Co., 31 Barclay St., New York, 1865.

A later undated edition from the same plates, marked "Copyright 1885."

The letters of Father De Smet were also extensively published in the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, Lyons; and in the *Précis Historiques*, Brussels, edited by Ed. Terwecoren, a friend and correspondent of De Smet; and in several Catholic periodicals in the United States.

Published after Father De Smet's death.

Father François Deynoodt, S.J., of Belgium, with the approval of Father De Smet, given a short time before his death, undertook the work of bringing out a complete edition of his writings, together with a biographical sketch. Up to the time when this work was arrested by Father Deynoodt's death the following had appeared:

Voyages aux Montagnes-Rocheuses, et Séjour chez les Tribus Indiennes de l'Orégon (*Etats-Unis*). Nouvelle Edition. Revue et considerrablement augmentée. Bruxelles, Victor Devaux et Cie., and Paris, H. Repos et Cie., 1873.

Voyages dans l'Amérique Septentrionale. Orégon. Troisième édition, soigneusement corrigée et augmentée de notes, d'un portrait et d'une carte. Mathieu Closson et Cie., Bruxelles, and H. Repos et Cie., Paris, 1874.

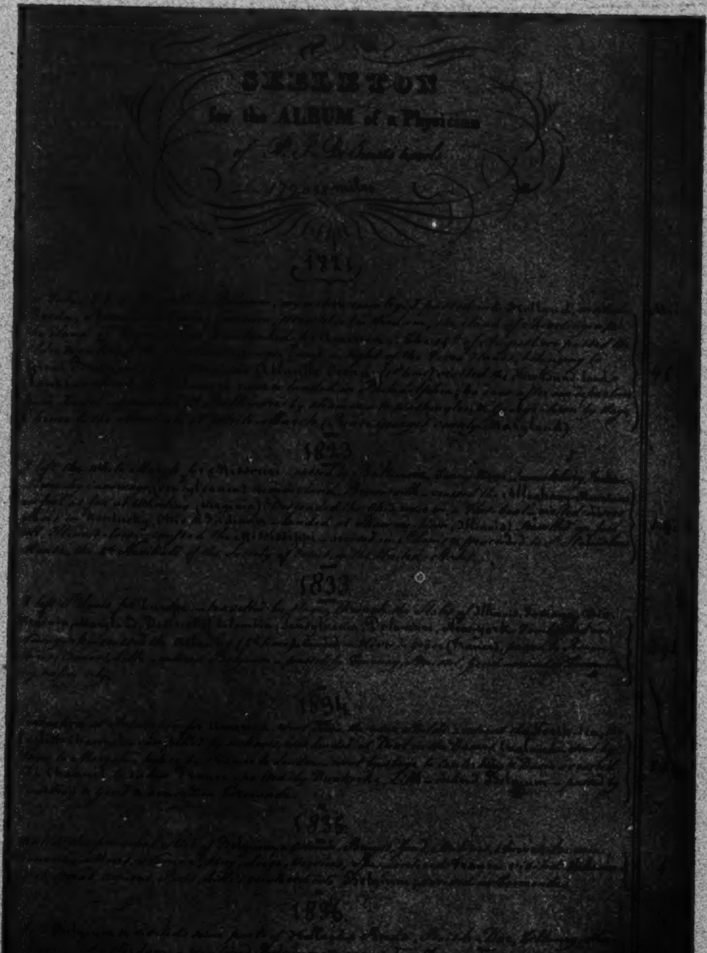
Lettres Choisies du Révérend Père Pierre-Jean De Smet de la Compagnie de Jésus, Missionaire aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique. Soigneusement Revues et corrigées d'après les manuscrits de l'auteur et Augmentées de nombreuses notes. En quatre Séries.

Première Série. 1849–1857. Bruxelles, Mathieu Closson et Cie.; Paris, H. Répos et Cie. 1875.

Seconde Série. 1855–1861. Bruxelles, F. Haenen; Paris, H. Répos et Cie. 1876.

Troisième Série. 1860–1867. Bruxelles, M. Closson et Cie.; Paris, H. Répos et Cie. 1877.

Quatrième Série. 1867–1873. Bruxelles, M. Closson et Cie. 1878.



SKELETON
for the ALBUM of a Physician
of P. J. De Smet's travels

1821

1823

1833

1834

1835

1836

FIRST PAGE OF ITINERARY, FROM THE LINTON ALBUM.

PART I.

THE POTAWATOMI MISSION.

1838–1839.

Itinerary of Father De Smet from 1821 *to* 1839 *inclusive.*

1821.

IN the month of July Father De Smet, then in his twenty-first year, left Belgium, his native country, in company with the Very Reverend Mr. Nerinckx, missionary to Kentucky — Passed through Holland, visiting several of its cities — Embarked at the Island of Texel on board the brig *Columbus* — Sailed on August 15th — Crossed the Atlantic (first time) in forty days — Landed at Philadelphia — Went by steamer to Baltimore — Went thence to Washington and Georgetown by stage — Thence to the Novitiate of Whitemarsh, fifteen miles from Annapolis, where he and his six companions entered the Society of Jesus — Remained at Whitemarsh eighteen months.

Distance traveled during year, 4,520 miles.

1823.

Early in the spring Father De Smet and his six Belgian companions left Whitemarsh with Fathers Van Quickenborne and Timmermans, who were sent by Monseigneur Du Bourg, Bishop of Louisiana and Missouri, to St. Ferdinand, near St. Louis, to found there the first Jesuit establishment in the western portions of North America since the suppression of the Society — Passed by way of Baltimore, Frederickstown and Cumberland to Wheeling on the Ohio, all the way "*pedibus apostolorum,* staff in hand" — Embarked at Wheeling in two house boats and descended the Ohio to Shawneetown, Ill., where they left the river and crossed the country on foot with much fatigue to the Mississippi opposite St. Louis — Crossed the river — Rested several days at the house of the Bishop — Went to St. Ferdinand fifteen miles from St. Louis to complete their two years of probation and to found the second novitiate of the Society of Jesus in the United States, and to prosecute their studies in philosophy and theology until 1827, the year of their ordination.— Number of novices increased from year to year — Churches were erected at St. Charles and other places, and the University of St. Louis was founded in 1830.

Distance traveled in 1823, 1,256 miles.

1833.

Left St. Louis for Europe under orders of his Superior on business for the Society and on account of his health — Traveled by way of Washington to New York, where he embarked (second passage of the ocean)— Landed at Havre, France, and proceeded thence via Paris and Rouen to Belgium — Arrived at Termonde, his birthplace.

Distance traveled, 4,987 miles.

1834.

Visited the principal cities of Belgium — Embarked at Antwerp with three candidates to return to America — Was taken dangerously ill on the North Sea as a result of tempestuous weather and violent sea-sickness — Advised by physician that he could not stand journey — Landed at Deal in the Downs, England — Traveled by stage to Margate, by steamboat to London, by stage to Dover — Crossed the channel to Calais — Passed by Dunkirk and Lille into Belgium, and to Termonde.

Distance traveled, 480 miles.

1835-1836.

Father De Smet spent these years in traversing the principal cities of Belgium, Holland and France on business of the Society.

Distance traveled in the two years, 738 miles.

1837.

Left Belgium — Entered France — Embarked at Havre on an American packet — crossed the Atlantic (third time) in thirty days — Landed at New York — Went by rail and canal to Pittsburg — Thence by steamboat to St. Louis — Visited the Lazarist Seminary at the Barrens, St. Mary's County, Mo., and then repaired with three candidates to the novitiate near St. Ferdinand.

Distance traveled, 5,268 miles.

1838.

Sent by his Superior, with one father and two brothers, to found a mission among the Potawatomies — Left St. Louis May 10th — Traveled all the way by steamboat, visiting en route the Kickapoos, Sauks, Iowas, Otoes, Missouris and Omahas — Arrived at destination May 31st — Erected a residence and church several miles from the river within the limits of the modern city of Council Bluffs.

Distance traveled, 685 miles.

1839.

Father De Smet made a trip up the Missouri on a mission of peace from the Potawatomies to the Sioux, the two tribes having been at war — Traveled by steamboat — Started April 29th — Ascended as far as Vermillion — Met and conferred with the Yanktons and Sioux — Returned by canoe to St. Joseph (or St. Mary) about May 15th — Went to St. Louis in December to procure supplies for the mission — Traveled overland all the way, on foot, horseback, and by wagon.

Distance traveled, 1,322 miles.

CHAPTER I.

JOURNEY TO COUNCIL BLUFFS.

Pursuit of the steamboat — Indians by the way — Site of St. Joseph — Inconveniences of river navigation — The Otoes and their minister — First touch of Indian life — Disappointing reception by the Potawatomies — Beginning of missionary work.

Reverend Father Superior:[1]

YOUR REVERENCE will have been uneasy, and will no doubt have desired for some time to receive news from this quarter. Opportunities to get letters through to you by way of Ft. Leavenworth are rare and uncertain and besides we have all been sick for a fortnight, which we attribute to the change from the thin warm water of the river to springwater as cold as ice. Father Felix is still indisposed.

I left the village of the Kickapoos on the 25th of May for the fort [Leavenworth], meaning to wait there for a boat. When I reached there I was surprised to learn from Mr. Hamilton that the *Wilmington* had left the place two hours before. Arming myself with a good switch, I applied it to the sides of my poor Rozinante, and galloping, galloping, we made together seven miles in half an hour. I reached the path where the boat was taking on wood in time. Nothing very remarkable happened during the voyage. The first night we stopped two miles from the village of Pashishi. Here the captain bought some twenty cords of wood, cut by the Indian women. The passengers amused themselves with putting up small coins on sticks to test the skill of the little Indians in shooting with the bow: one especially, only

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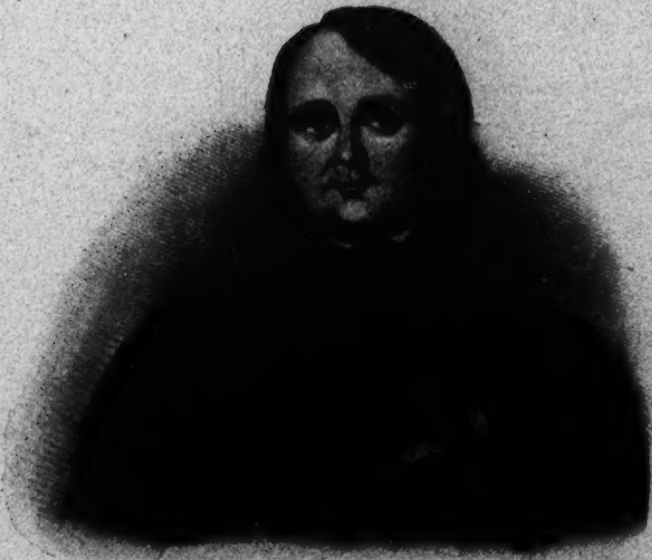
[1] A hitherto unpublished fragment in French, giving a description of Father De Smet's journey from the Kickapoo village to the Potawatomies in 1838. Written June, 1838, at the Potawatomi Mission, Council Bluffs.



YOUTHFUL PORTRAIT OF FATHER DE SMET.

seven or eight years old, handled his bow and arrows with admirable dexterity, for though the distance was considerable he never missed, and he always went promptly to put the little piece of money into his poor mother's hands. I rejoiced in his good success: he was the only one who had a chaplet and medal about his neck, and I learned that he had been baptized by the Rev. F. Van Quickenborne.[2] Toward evening I paid a visit to Pashishi's village, situated on the river.

The soil all around seemed to me very rich, the woods that I traversed on my way were superb and the prairie smiling and beautiful. There this good chief might live quiet and happy, if he had the courage to embrace our holy religion, for he acknowledges it to be the only true one, and he often tells how "in a dream, the ancient Fathers of the Society, who had formerly visited his tribe, appeared to him and reproached him with the hardness of heart of his nation and their perversity in stubbornly refusing to receive and follow the law of Christ; that that is the cause why the Great Spirit has abandoned them to all sorts of irregularities and to the impositions of a false prophet (Keokuk, of whom I will tell you hereafter); and that none of them should escape his wrath in the other world."

We stopped for two hours at the Black-snake Hills [St. Joseph, Mo.]. There I had a long talk with J[oseph] R[oubidoux], who keeps a store and runs his father's fine farm. He showed me a great deal of affection and kindness, and expressed a wish to build a little chapel there, if his father can manage to get some French families to come and settle near them. The place is one of the finest on the Missouri for the erection of a city.

At one of the landings or paths, where the boat had stopped to take on wood, which generally takes an hour, I took a walk along the bank alone in search of rare plants. I had seated myself on a rock when a negro of eighty years came up to me. He seemed to stare at me attentively and with astonishment because of my black coat, and asked me if I was not a Catholic priest? Having replied that I was, he said to me with tears in his eyes "I too have the happiness of being a Catholic, but it is five years since I had that of seeing a priest of my religion. Often have I said my prayers that I might have the consolation of confessing once more before I die. Sir, would you not have the kindness to hear and help me?" I made him sit down beside me, and I had hardly uttered the words of absolution when the steamboat bell gave the signal for starting. The poor old man wept with joy and pressed my hand, unable to speak a word. I cannot express to you the consolation that this little meeting yielded me.

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[2] Rev. Charles Felix Van Quickenborne; born 1788 in Ghent, died near St. Charles, Mo., August 17, 1837. The first Jesuit to enter the Mississippi valley after the re-establishment of the Society. One of Father De Smet's teachers at Whitemarsh, and his conductor to Missouri.

As we passed up by the Sauk country, the bank for more than a quarter of a mile presented nothing but groups of savages, warriors, women and children, accompanied by an army of dogs. Curiosity to see the steamboat pass had no doubt attracted them to the bank. The chiefs, who knew Father Verreydt and Brother Mazelli, saluted us in a most affectionate manner, wished us a fortunate voyage and promised to come and see us soon.

We stopped several hours at the village of the Iowas. There I talked with our former disciple Francis, called White Cloud, who since his father was killed has become chief of the nation. I made him a little present of tobacco, which he accepted with much pleasure. It seems that these Indians are very much dissatisfied with their present minister and they expressed to me their wish to have us among them. They seem poor and very drunken, sell everything they have to obtain the unlucky stuff, the great scourge of the Indians. Some days before we were there an Indian had been killed in a drunken row and several mortally wounded. I noticed among them certain young men well dressed, with silk ribbons of all colors entwined in their hair, a profusion of porcelain beads hung about their necks, and wolf-tails and little bells attached to their heels, knees and arms. Their faces too were painted with great care, in red, black, green, gray, yellow and brown according to the taste of each. In Belgium they would have been taken for fine Harlequins from the fairs. All these young men were playing on a sort of flageolet or flute. I addressed a young savage who spoke English well to learn the reason of this distinction. He laughed and told me: "Those gentlemen are in love. When any one among us desires to wed, he makes his inclination known by playing the flute, and passes whole days, and often nights too, in serenading around the girl's cabin. When the parents have arranged the affair, he passes his flute on to another comrade who has been taken with the notion." This custom seems quite general among all the tribes.

With the exception of the snags which raked and scraped us now and then and the sand-bars which opposed our passage, and which had to be crossed at all hazards, our journey was pleasant enough. The boat has to be lifted over these bars, which is not any too easy. Two heavy timbers [spars] are set in the water in front and the boat made fast to them. Then the engine is started full speed, and by means of posts it lifts the stern and shoves the boat forward a yard or two or three. Then the same thing is done over again, and so on until the bar is crossed. This often takes a whole day.

The Devil's Rake, which has to be passed through, is a place much dreaded by the rivermen. It has the appearance of a whole forest, swallowed up by the immense river. Gigantic trees stretch their naked and menacing limbs on all sides; you see them thrashing in the water, throwing up foam with a furious hissing sound as they struggle against the rapid torrent. Add to these inconveniences the fear of the boiler exploding, which often causes loss of life among the unhappy travelers. At the same time the weather was excessively hot: the warm, muddy water of the Missouri was our only drink, and myriads of mosquitos, fleas, and other insects were our traveling companions. Still every one spoke of the beautiful fortunate voyage we had made. I fear the sea, I will admit, but all the storms and other unpleasant things I have experienced in four different voyages did not inspire so much terror in me as the navigation of the somber, treacherous and muddy Missouri.

The Missouri has the same characteristic features from its mouth to Council Bluffs, and even 1,500 miles farther. After you pass the fort the prairies along the river are more extensive. The eastern shore is being settled very rapidly as far as across the Nishnabotna, insomuch that we were not once obliged to stop to have the crew cut wood. While the boat was stranded on a big sand-bar ten miles below the mouth of the Platte, I had a chance to explore the rocks, and found a great number of petrifactions scattered along the bank, among them fine specimens of the pretended vegetable-animal, the polyp, tubipores, encrini, trachitæ, columnar asteria, etc. I filled my handkerchief to send to you. I unluckily forgot on board the *Howard* the stones and minerals I had picked up below the fort.

I visited the village of the Otoes; they seem poor and miserable; steal when they can and get drunk when they have a chance. They have a Baptist minister[3] among them. The $600 that the Government grants every year to this reverend gentleman; the aid which the Boston propaganda sends his Reverence; and a fine farm which he cultivates carefully and which brings him in a large profit each year, are so many items which prevail on him to remain among them; for in the five years that he has been here he has not yet baptized a single person. Indeed, that is all that this horde of apostles of Protestantism, with which all the Indian territory is flooded, are doing. The reverend lady of the Otoe minister, and her reverend little ducky, were on board the same boat that took us up.

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[3] Reverend Moses Merrill, born in Maine in 1803, died at the Otoe Mission February 6, 1840, of consumption. Baptist missionary at Sault Ste Marie, 1832, Bellevue fall of 1833. Author of hymn-book and some other works in the Otoe language. The reports of the Nebraska State Historical Society contain a biography by a son, Reverend Samuel Pearce Merrill, the first white child born in Nebraska; probably the "reverend ducky" (*poupon*) of the text; also extracts from journals of Mr. and Mrs. Merrill, in which occasional mention is made of baptisms among the Indians.

There was another Baptist mission established about 1837 by Rev. Samuel Curtis and wife, first at Bellevue, later at Blackbird Hills, among the Omahas.

A visit to an Indian village is worth a few words of description. Some of the interesting peculiarities that I observed among the Otoes were as follows. Groups of naked children were amusing themselves on all sides at various games, and painfully lean dogs without end were frolicking with these young *sans culottes*. The village consists of a number of large earthen huts, containing some ten families each, and a few tents of tanned buffalo hides sewed together. The women whom I met presented an appearance of the utmost misery. Some were blind, others one-eyed, and all extremely filthy and disgusting to look at. They were clothed in petticoats of deerskin, reaching to the knees, jackets, leggings and shoes of the same material, all as dirty and black as if they had been their towels for the last century. Bracelets of polished metal were worn at the wrists by both sexes, and around their necks they had five or six yards of porcelain or glass beads.

I was introduced into the largest cabin, that of the first chief; his queen put me a cushion, shining with grease, upon a still more greasy mat, and made me the sign to be seated. She then presented me a rudely-made wooden dish (for everything here is done with the hatchet and knife) and a pot-spoon of the same material, which seemed not to have been washed since the day of their manufacture. Then she served me with a stew of her own compounding and a pie of a grey color and sufficiently disgusting in appearance. To refuse a savage who offers you food in his own cabin would be considered a grave affront. "Well, well," I said to myself, "you are not in Belgium; let us begin our apprenticeship in earnest, and so long as we are in the woods, howl heartily with the wolves." A dozen or more dogs, sitting on their hams in front of me, with their eyes fastened on my dish, seemed really to envy me my happiness as I approached my spoon to it, and to be offering their aid and assistance in case of need. But it was not necessary to have recourse to my canine company; I had a good appetite and the stew was excellent, a buffalo tongue with a good gravy of bear fat, mixed with flour from the wild sweet potato. I thanked my hostess, and handed her dish back much cleaner than I had received it.

It is sorrowful to see the neglected condition of the little children in all the Indian villages. Their hair seems never to have undergone the operation of the brush, so that their heads look like masses of cobwebs. Many have eye trouble, and their faces and all their limbs look as if water had never touched them. The younger ones are generally naked, and great was the alarm which my presence occasioned among this juvenile portion of the community, wherever I presented myself without warning. The dogs in these villages (all belonging to the wolf family) are the greatest torments to a stranger; the barking of one brings all the others together, of all sizes; they form a chorus, utter piercing yelps and roars and follow you in all directions.

The men seem to pass their time in complete idleness: playing cards and smoking are their only amusements. They subsist the greater part of the time on a small quantity of dried meat and a mush made of roasted and pounded corn. But this temperance and frugality are the result of necessity, not of choice, for when they have abundance you will see them thrust their whole hands into the pot and eat incessantly like starving wolves until they are ready to split; then they lie down and go to sleep. All their wealth consists of a few horses which graze at large in the uncultivated prairie. It is truly a melancholy sight to see these desolate villages surrounded by such fine country and such fertile virgin soil. The Indian at his birth is wrapped in rags; he grows up in buffalo-skins; he is raised in idleness, and industry has no attractions for him; he never tries to improve his condition, and in fact were one of them to aspire to higher enjoyments and to raise his fortune by his efforts and activity, he would soon find himself the object of universal hatred and envy, and whatever he had gathered together would speedily be pillaged or sacked.

We arrived among the Potawatomies on the afternoon of the 31st of May. Nearly 2,000 savages, in their finest rigs and carefully painted in all sorts of patterns, were awaiting the boat at the landing. I had not seen so imposing a sight nor such fine-looking Indians in America: the Iowas, the Sauks and the Otoes are beggars compared to these. Father Verreydt and Brother Mazelli went at once to the camp of the half-breed chief, Mr. Caldwell, four miles from the river. We were far from finding here the four or five hundred fervent Catholics we had been told of at the College of St. Louis. Of the 2,000 Potawatomies who were at the landing, not a single one seemed to have the slightest knowledge of our arrival among them, and they all showed themselves cold or at least indifferent toward us. Out of some thirty families of French half-breeds two only came to shake hands with us; only a few have been baptized. All are very ignorant concerning the truths of religion; they cannot even make the sign of the cross nor say a pater or an ave. This, as I suppose, is the cause of their great reserve toward us. They change wives as often as the gentlemen of St. Louis change their coats. * * * (Portion illegible.)

A fortnight after our arrival we discovered one single Catholic Indian; he came to see us and asked our blessing.

We tried to get him to stay with us; he knew his prayers well and could serve us for a catechist.

Mr. C[aldwell?], though far advanced in years, seems to be a very worthy honest man: he is well disposed toward us and ready to assist us. The half-breeds generally seem affable and inclined to have their children instructed, and we receive many tokens of affection from the Indians themselves; they come to see us every day. The chief has given us possession of three cabins, and we have changed the fort which Colonel Kearny[4] has given us into a church. On the day of Corpus Christi I put up a cross on the roof, and while I climbed the ladder to put it in place, and my flag floated from a hole in my breeches, Father Felix beheld the devil clap his tail between his legs and take flight over the big hills.

I employ my days in instructing the children: I have already baptized ————, among them a young man of eighteen years of age. At present I am preparing for baptism twelve or fourteen of ten to twenty years. This nation is divided into different bands, living five to twenty-five miles apart. We try to visit them once a week, to instruct the children and preach to the elders, through an interpreter. Providence has placed us at some distance from any great number of these savages, for since the arrival of the steamboat, which brought a large quantity of liquor, they are quarreling and fighting from morning till night. When they are sober the most perfect harmony prevails throughout the nation: whole years often pass without quarrels. They are not at all addicted to the pernicious practice of slander; the most corrupt regard a slanderer with disdain, while the more respectable avoid him as they would a snake. No one would dare make accusations against those who enjoy a good reputation, and as for the good-for-nothings, they do not lower themselves so far as to speak of them. (Portion illegible.)

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[4] Brigadier-General Stephen W. Kearny of the Mexican War, Governor of California, etc. "Old" Fort Kearney at Table Creek (Nebraska City) was named for him, he having chosen the site in 1838 and begun the construction of a post there in 1846; also the Fort Kearney of the emigrant period, on the Platte, opposite the present city of Kearney, upon his death in 1848. His name was Kearny, but the other spelling has become fixed in the maps.— Perhaps more frequently mentioned by contemporary travelers than any other army officer; see Catlin, Parkman, Beckwourth, Garrard, Hildreth, Bryant, etc.

CHAPTER II.

COMMENTS ON THE SITUATION.

Dangers of the Missouri — Kickapoos, Sauks, Iowas and Otoes — Hindrances to conversion of Indians on the frontiers — The Pawnees prefer Catholic priests — Their opinion of liquor — The Omahas come and dance — The Indian Question in 1838 — Notes on the country — Missionary progress.

Reverend and Very Dear Father:[1]

KNOWING the great interest that you take in the Indian missions, I propose to give you some details concerning those which we have just undertaken, adding various Indian traditions and a few observations upon the manners and customs of these peoples. In these remote regions, we necessarily meet with numerous privations; but the Lord never lets himself be outdone in generosity; he repays a hundredfold the slightest sacrifice made for him; and if our privations are great, our consolations are much greater. I thank Divine Providence daily for having put me in these countries.

I set out from St. Louis on the 10th day of May, in the company of our Reverend Father Superior [Verhaegen][2] who was to visit the Kickapoos, and Father Helias, who was going to found a new mission among the Germans around Jefferson City. I made the whole journey on the steamboat, and arrived among the Potawatomies of the Prairies on the 31st of the same month.

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[1] To the Father General, dated, Nation of the Potawatomies at the Council Bluffs, July 20, 1838. Translated from the French of Father De Smet's manuscripts. A portion of the letter was published as Letter XXVII, *Missions de l'Orégon.*

[2] Peter Joseph Verhaegen, a Belgian, one of the young men who came to America in 1821 and to Missouri in 1823, with Father De Smet; died at St. Charles July 21, 1868, at the age of sixty-eight. Father Verhaegen was very closely connected with Father De Smet throughout their lives. He was a finely educated man, and was first president of the St. Louis University, first vice-provincial of Missouri, provincial of Maryland and first president of St. Joseph's College at Bardstown.

To relate to you all our adventures on the old Father of Waters, the Mississippi, and particularly on the Missouri or "muddy water," which we ascended for a distance of over 800 miles; to describe to you all the little towns and villages which are born, as if by magic, upon its banks; the vertical cliffs, several hundred feet high, the caverns, the forests and the immense prairies which follow one another in prodigious variety on its shores; its bed, strewn with numberless islands one, two, three and even four leagues in length and filled with every kind of game: this task would carry me a great deal too far and could only interest you in a slight degree. I will only remind you that steam navigation on the Missouri is one of the most dangerous things that a man can undertake. In my opinion, the sea, despite its storms and the tribute which one is compelled to pay, is much to be preferred. The current of this river is of the swiftest; high pressure is therefore required to overcome it, and hence the continual danger to which the traveler is exposed of finding himself overturned, and even, as happens only too often, of having his limbs shattered and hurled here and there to a terrible elevation. Add the sand-bars with which the river is filled, and upon which one is always being cast, and the innumerable snags and sawyers upon which boats are often wrecked; all these things brought us several times within a finger's breadth of our destruction. Snags are trees whose roots are imbedded in the mud at the bottom of the river, with their branches spreading on all sides below, above and at the water-level.[8]

I stopped three days at our residence of the Kickapoos, to wait for Father Verreydt and Brother Mazelli, with whom I was to continue my journey. The head chief

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[8] This excellent summary of the difficulties of Missouri river navigation is evidence of Father De Smet's habit of close observation.

Pashihi appeared much attached to us, and showed us a great deal of affection. He is a man full of wit and good sense, who needs only a little courage to become an excellent Christian; he told us several times that in a vision he had seen the "Ma-che-ta-co-ni-a" (Black-gowns) in heaven, reproaching his nation with their unfaithfulness and vices, and telling them that because they were not willing to listen to them in time, the Great Spirit had rejected them.

The Sauk Indians, who are two days' journey further north, were drawn up on the river bank to see us pass, and the chiefs, who had often visited our residence, recognizing us by our black robes, saluted us very cordially with a shout of joy, and wished us a pleasant and prosperous voyage. The Iowas, whom we visited in passing, also seemed very favorable to us, and sought to keep us among themselves. Their head chief, White Cloud, had been my disciple at St. Ferdinand a dozen years before. Before we reached our destination we traversed the villages of the Otoes.[4] They build their huts in the form of mounds and cover them with sod. These huts are so large that 150 people may be lodged in one at their ease; the interior resembles a temple; the rafters which support the sods rest upon a score of pillars or posts; a hole arranged in the top lets in light and gives an outlet to the smoke. They are a poor nation and very much addicted to thievery and drink. They are the only Indians I know of who, in their misfortunes and reverses, lay the blame upon the Great Spirit and dare to blaspheme.

One day when the boat had stopped and the crew landed to cut wood, I walked back from the river quite a distance. In my excursion I met an old man of ninety who halted as I drew near and looked at me with astonishment mingled with joy. He had judged from my garb that I was a priest, and when I had confirmed him in his idea, "Ah! my

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[4] The Otoes dwelt near the mouth of the Platte, sometimes on its left bank, sometimes on the right.

Father," he cried, "I am a Catholic, and it is many years since I have had the happiness of seeing a priest. I have so ardently desired to see one before I die! Help me therefore to be reconciled with God." I hastened eagerly to comply with his request, and we both of us wept abundantly. Then he conducted me back to the boat and I parted from the good old man; but I cannot tell you the consolation that I tasted in this most fortunate meeting.

When we arrived, and while our things were being unloaded, a young man was brought on board the boat, very dangerously sick. It was late, and on account of our baggage I could not go ashore to the cabin that the head chief of the nation had caused to be made ready for us. The young man suffered a great deal during the night; though unknown, I went into his room to relieve or console him. I learned that he was a Catholic, and that he had received from an uncle, a zealous churchman, a Christian education; moreover, he had always felt a great devotion for the Mother of God. For six years he had been traveling in the mountains, among the different nations, without ever seeing a priest. I had no trouble to bring him to shrive himself, and I gave him extreme unction. I have since learned that he died the day after he reached the end of his voyage.

There are great obstacles to be overcome in converting an Indian nation; the principal ones are the immoderate use of strong drink, polygamy, superstitious practices and prejudices, a language of which it is very hard to acquire a knowledge, and their inclination to a wandering life; this inclination is so strong that they become melancholy and morose if they stay three months in the same place; their conversion is therefore altogether a work of God. This portion of the divine Master's vineyard requires from those who tend it, a life of crosses, privations and patience. Still we hope, that aided as we are by grace, and assisted by your prayers and those of all our brothers, the Lord will grant some measure of success to our feeble labors.

The results of the last four [?] months have been truly consoling; a goodly number of the savages show a desire of being instructed. We have opened a school; but for the lack of larger quarters we are only able to receive some thirty children. Twice a day we give an instruction to those whom we are preparing for baptism. We have already admitted 118, and I have had the consolation of baptizing 105. The day of the glorious Assumption of the most holy Virgin Mary will not soon be forgotten among the Potawatomies. The church where the divine service was celebrated was perhaps the poorest in the world; but twelve young neophytes, who three months before had had no idea of the law of God, sang mass in a manner truly edifying. Reverend F. Verreydt preached upon devotion to the Mother of God; afterward I gave an instruction upon the ceremonies and upon the necessity of baptism, and conferred that sacrament upon a score of adults; the wife of the head chief was among the number. This woman is very charitable, she has zeal and stands high in the esteem of her nation. It is to be hoped that her conversion will soon attract others to our holy religion. After the mass I blessed four marriages. In the evening we paid a visit to one of these converted families; all our little congregation was assembled to return thanks to God for the signal benefits with which he had overwhelmed them during this feast. These honest people are now overrunning the country in every direction to win their near relations and acquaintances, to bring them to be instructed and enjoy the same happiness with themselves. Several Indian women, whose relations, being still in paganism, would not let us know, have dragged themselves, sick as they were, for a distance of two to three leagues, to come and ask us for baptism before they died. I could tell you many other admirable anecdotes of our new converts, but the narrative would carry me too far.[8]

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[8] For the part of this letter omitted here, see p. 1098.

Three of the head chiefs of the Pawnee Loups[6] came to pay us a visit, and lodged in our cabin. They noticed the sign of the cross that we made before and after our prayers and our meals, and when they went home, they taught all the inmates of their village to make the same sign, as something agreeable to the Great Spirit. They begged us, through their interpreter, to come and visit them. The Government had sent them a Protestant minister,[7] but they did not choose to keep him. "They knew," they told him, "that the devil accompanied such as he; and since they did not wish to have such a guest in their village, they could not admit him himself." The use of liquor is prohibited in this tribe, and when any one tries to bring them any they answer that they are crazy enough already without drink. They have also a singular custom; they eat the vermin off one another, and render the same service to those who come to visit them.

The Protestant minister of the Omahas also had to move. This tribe has a population of about 2,000 souls. Two of their chiefs, Kaiggechinke and Ohio, with two-score warriors, came to dance the calumet, or their dance of friendship for us. Such a dance is really worth seeing, but it is not easy to give one an idea of it, because everything seems confusion. They yell and strike their mouths, at the same time performing leaps of all descriptions, now on one foot, now on the other, always at the sound of the drum and in perfect time, pell-mell, without order, turning to the right and left, in every direction and in every shape, all at once. They all evinced the greatest affection for us and prayed us to smoke the calumet with them. I showed our chapel to the chiefs, who appeared to take great interest in the explanation I gave them of the cross, the altar and the images of the passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Afterward they urgently begged me to come and make them a visit, to baptize their children, and they made me a present of a fine beaver skin for a tobacco-bag. I in turn gave them some chaplets for the children and to each one a fair copper cross, which they received with great gratitude, kissing them respectfully and putting them around their necks. When speaking, they addressed me in the most cordial manner. They are scarcely more than a hundred miles from Council Bluffs.[8]

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[6] The Pawnee villages were on the Platte, about the present Fremont and Columbus.

[7] Probably the reference is to Samuel Allis or Reverend John Dunbar, Presbyterians, who went among the Pawnees in the fall of 1834. The former attached himself to the band known as Pawnee Loups, the latter to the Grand Pawnees. They remained among them until 1846, when the hostile operations of the Sioux made the country unsafe.

The new Indian territory, as lately arranged by the Government, will have as its limits the Red river on the south, and on the east the State of Arkansas and that of Missouri, with the river of the same name; so that we have already seen a good portion of it. The territory now contains the following nations: Poncas, Dourvas [?], Otoes, Kansas, Osages, Kickapoos, Potawatomies, Delawares, Shawanos, Weas, Piankishaws, Peorias, Kaskaskias, Ottowas, Senecas, Sauks, Quapaws, Creeks, Cherokees and Choctaws. There are about 100,000 of them, sad remnants of once powerful nations. When the Europeans visited the new world for the first time, they found its islands and shores extremely populous; but several tribes that were flourishing, have now disappeared from the surface of the earth; the very names of many are unknown. As fast as the whites extended their dominion in the east, the savages withdrew toward the west, leaving behind them, at every step that they took, mournful monuments of their misfortunes and decadence. Here to-day are 100,000 of them, pushed out upon the borders of the vast and uninhabitable prairie; hunting cannot suffice for their subsistence; they are unused to labor; one may well, therefore, feel serious apprehensions concerning their lot. Ah! if there were

[8] The Omahas were on the right or west bank of the Missouri river, twenty-five miles below Sioux City.

more of us, with means to correspond, this would perhaps be the moment to accomplish permanent good among them and to prevent their total extinction. There are besides many other nations on both sides of the mountains called Rocky Mountains: they number several hundreds of thousands; some of these tribes, which are very numerous, have already invited us to come and settle among them. I may say that almost all the nations of the northern part of America show a great predilection for the Catholic missionaries and seem to stretch their arms toward us in preference, notwithstanding the millions of dollars that the Protestant societies are spending to attach these poor people to themselves; for as a matter of fact, these dollars serve only to enrich the so-called ministers of the gospel, with their wives and children that they drag around with them. Meanwhile they come and occupy the ground, and wherever they are, it is very difficult to form a Catholic establishment afterward.

It is not uncommon to meet bears in our neighborhood; but this animal will seldom attack a man first, though he will defend himself when wounded. Wolves come very often to our very doors; quite lately they have carried off all our chickens. They are of all kinds; prairie-wolves, small and timid; black mountain wolves, large and dangerous. We are obliged to be continually on our guard against these bad neighbors, and so I never go out without a good knife, a tomahawk or a sword-cane. There are snakes too, among which I might name the copper-head, the garter-snake [? *couleuvre*], blacksnake and rattlesnake. Field, forest and cabin swarm with mice, which gnaw and devour the few fruits that we possess. Insects, butterflies especially, are very numerous here, and very variegated and very large. Night-moths are of all colors and of a prodigious size; they are no less than eight inches in length. We live also in the midst of horse-flies and mosquitoes; they come upon us by thousands and give us no rest day nor night.

I wish I could give Your Paternity an idea of the architecture of an Indian village; it is as outlandish as their dancing. Imagine a great number of cabins and tents, made of the bark of trees, buffalo skins, coarse cloth, rushes and sods, all of a mournful and funereal aspect, of all sizes and shapes, some supported by one pole, others having six, and with the covering stretched in all the different styles imaginable, and all scattered here and there in the greatest confusion, and you will have an Indian village.

We have a fine little chapel, twenty-four feet square, surmounted with a little belfry; four poor little cabins besides, made of rough logs; they are fourteen feet each way, with roofs of rude rafters, which protect us from neither rain nor hail, and still less from the snow in winter.

Good Brother Mazelli and myself commend ourselves urgently to the holy sacrifices and prayers of Your Paternity.

Very dear and Reverend Father: *

I think I told you, the first time I wrote you, that I had already baptized twenty-two persons. To-day the number of those upon whom I have had the consolation of conferring holy baptism amounts to seventy-six, among whom I reckon thirty-four adults of ages from twelve to sixty years. I am sure that Your Reverence would be touched to see with what fervor these good Indians assist at the holy sacrifice and with what docility they listen to our instructions. For my part, I assure you that I see the work of God in it, and that I feel penetrated with gratitude toward those who, by their prayers, cease not to obtain for us from heaven these unexpected successes. One of our first conquests for Jesus Christ was the spouse of the head chief of the Potawatomi

* Extract from a letter to Father Verhaegen, Superior of the Mission of Missouri. Dated Potawatomi Nation, St. Joseph [Mission], August 20, 1838. Translated from the French and hitherto unpublished.

nation. She enjoys the greatest consideration among the Indians, and I venture to hope that her example will have a great influence upon the rest of her compatriots. Since I could not at the beginning express myself with sufficient facility, I was obliged for several weeks to make use of an interpreter. As soon as I found her well enough instructed and disposed, I admitted her to the sacrament of regeneration, which she received with all signs of the liveliest faith and the most ardent piety. Eight other persons, who had imitated her example, shared her happiness.

A short time afterward, on the 9th of August, a young person of eighteen years of age, who had long been sick, came over six miles to find me. She seemed in a state of extreme exhaustion when I saw her in the church. "Father," she said, "I have a secret presentiment that my end is near; I know that you are the Great Spirit's minister, and I have made a great effort today to come and beg you to show me the road that leads to heaven." I spent several hours in instructing her in the most essential dogmas of our holy religion, and as I found her fully disposed to receive holy baptism, I thought it my duty to bestow it upon her at once. I have never seen a person so self-possessed, so modest, so deeply touched during the administration of the holy sacrament. After the ceremony, she said to me: "Oh! now, until my last breath, I shall love the Great Spirit with all my heart, and shall honor his good Mother with a daughter's love. Oh! I am happy in this moment!"

On the 13th of the same month, an Indian woman brought me her little child, who was sick, praying me to baptize it. "Alas!" said the poor woman, "I had another son, and he died without having received this favor, and it would break my heart should this one be likewise exiled from the paradise of the Great Spirit." Among those whom I have baptized are a Protestant lady and her child; she is now one of the most fervent of Catholics; all the others are Indians or half-breeds, who do not know even the name of our holy religion. There are a few families besides who are preparing to receive the same favor. My companion, Reverend Father Verreydt, lately visited a village belonging to the mission, where they promised to let him baptize all the little children.

The feast that we have just been celebrating in honor of the assumption of the glorious queen of heaven will never be forgotten in this mission; it was celebrated in a poor wooden church, but I can assure you that no place in the world ever offered a more consoling spectacle nor one more agreeable to the Almighty and his most holy mother.

In the afternoon of that day I baptized eleven adults and a little Indian girl who was sick. Three of these adults had already reached their fiftieth year; five were twenty, and three about fifteen years old. All exhibited during the ceremony a great deal of piety and fervor. Afterward we sang together several canticles to praise and bless the Lord's mercies. At the close of the ceremony, four couples received the nuptial benediction according to the Catholic rite. All who were present were so touched with what they had seen and heard that, yielding to the grace of the Holy Spirit, they demanded urgently to be instructed. Among this number was an old Indian woman belonging to the great medicine band, who, as soon as she reached home, immediately destroyed her medicine bundle. Going toward evening to visit a newly converted family, we were agreeably surprised and edified to find all the adults and several others besides assembled to recite in common the most fervent prayers, and to thank the Lord for the signal favors that he had granted them that day. I cannot conceal from you, dear Father, that in no circumstances of my life have I ever felt, myself, more joy and consolation than in this happy moment.

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CHAPTER III.

DAILY LIFE AT THE MISSION.

A missionary journal — Major Dougherty — Indian councils — Glory of the warpath — Liquor in abundance — Murder and mutilation — Sale of children — Law ineffective — How the Indians spent $90,000 — Colonel Kearny — Protestant ministers leaving — Peace mission to the Sioux.

Most dear Sir:[1]

YOUR kind favors of the 6th of July and the 27th of October arrived this day. Had I known, dear friend, for what port of this vast continent you had sailed, I would have written long before this; for I am not of that class of gentry who easily forget their real friends. No! your family will be ever dear to me, and it will afford me at all times the greatest satisfaction and pleasure to hear from you, and to know that you are well and prospering. Not a day passes, but I pray the Lord for your family's welfare.

I keep a journal of the most remarkable events which take place around us. They are of a rather gloomy nature, disgusting and discouraging; a short sketch, however, of these I intend to give you, and I feel confident your regret at having left the Council Bluffs, when being made acquainted with the abominations of the place, will soon vanish.

May 10. Mr. Dougherty[2] held a council at Bellevue with the Pawnees. An Iowa waylaid a Pawnee, took his scalp and escaped. Paid the Pawnees a hundred dollars' worth in goods for the body. Obtained the title of a distinguished warrior among his nation.

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[1] Letter to a "most dear friend," dated Potawatomi Nation, Council Bluffs, December, 1839. Hitherto unpublished.

[2] John Dougherty, a member of Long's exploring party and for many years Government agent for the Pawnees. Somewhat famous in his time for having almost succeeded in rescuing a female captive who had been devoted to sacrifice by that tribe. A brother, Hannibal, was also at this time sub-agent at Bellevue.

May 12. Majors Dougherty and Davis held council with the Potawatomies and proposed an exchange of country. The Indians unanimously refused to treat, and declared upon the wampum belt (equal to an oath among the whites) they would not and could not enter into any engagements, a great majority of their brethren being absent. They expressed a desire to see all former treaty stipulations first executed: they had no confidence in a new treaty.

24. A war party of Sauks discovered three lodges of Omahas on the head waters of the Boyer consisting of nine men and twelve women. Invited them to a friendly smoke; accepted, believing them to be Potawatomies. They were treacherously murdered and their women taken prisoners. Danced nine days round the scalp post in the Sauk village. Huzza! for the Indian braves.

25. Two Potawatomies killed on the Chage [?] river in a drunken frolic.

27. Three Potawatomies drowned in the Missouri, supposed to be drunk.

28. A Potawatomie poisoned on the Mosquito while drunk. Frequently the case.

30. Arrival of the steamer *Wilmington* with provisions. A war of extermination appears preparing around the poor Potawatomies. Fifty large cannons have been landed, ready charged with the most murderous grape shot, each containing thirty gallons of whiskey, brandy, rum or alcohol. The boat was not as yet out of sight when the skirmishes com-

menced. After the fourth, fifth and sixth discharges, the confusion became great and appalling. In all directions, men, women and children were seen tottering and falling; the war-whoop, the merry Indian's song, cries, savage roarings, formed a chorus. Quarrel succeeded quarrel. Blows followed blows. The club, the tomahawk, spears, butcher knives, brandished together in the air. Strange! astonishing! only one man, in this dreadful affray, was drowned in the Missouri; another severely stabbed, and several noses lost. The prominent point, as you well know, the Potawatomies particularly aim at when well corned.

I shuddered at the deed. A squaw offered her little boy four years old, to the crew of the boat for a few bottles of whiskey.

I know from good authority, that upwards of eighty barrels of whiskey are on the line ready to be brought in at the payment.

No agent here seems to have the power to put the laws in execution.

May 31. Drinking all day. Drunkards by the dozen. Indians are selling horses, blankets, guns, their all, to have a lick at the cannon. Four dollars a bottle! Plenty at that price!! Detestable traffic.

June 3. A woman with child, mother of four young children, was murdered this morning near the issue-house. Her body presented the most horrible spectacle of savage cruelty; she was literally cut up.

4. Burial of the unhappy woman. Among the provisions placed in her grave were several bottles of whiskey. A good idea if all had been buried with her.

June 5. A drunken Potawatomi killed a Sauk. The murderer, after the perpetration of the deed, was mortally stabbed by his own father-in-law. Indian way of redressing wrongs.

6. Rumor. Four Iowas, three Potawatomies, one Kickapoo are said to have been killed in drunken frolics.

7. Attempt at murder. A Potawatomi was discovered endeavoring to kill his aunt, our next neighbor. Timely assistance, a knock down, prevented him.

11. Another bluff accident. Severe scalding. An Iowa drew his knife to stab a companion, when another friend, without the least ceremony or hesitation, poured over the aggressor's head a full kettle of boiling soup. The unhappy man escaped death, lost his hair only, and presents a melancholy appearance amongst his kindred.

19. A monster in human shape. On the Mosquito [Creek], a savage returning home from a night's debauch, wrested his infant son from the breast of his mother and crushed him against a post of his lodge.

17. *Tekchabe,* another Mosquito Potawatomi, shot an Indian through the thigh merely for the pleasure of killing, and finished the unhappy man with the butt of his gun; pounding the head literally to atoms. The nephew of the murdered individual, as a matter of course, stole up to Tekchabe's camp, found him lying down apparently composing himself to sleep and shot him instantly through the head. This whole affair was settled within twenty minutes' time.

18. Arrival of a sub-agent, Mr. Cowper. His presence seems to keep the whiskey sellers in

some awe, "Don't know what he might or will do." Secure the liquor in cages. The many murders committed act powerfully upon the minds of the Indians. They begged the agent in council to prevent the poison being brought among them.

June 20. A young brother of McPherson killed the assistant blacksmith of the Potawatomies, a Mr. Case, an old man; shot him through the head. Got clear at the court in Liberty.

July 6. A company of dragoons from Fort Leavenworth arrived at Bellevue with the Omaha women whom the Sauks had surrendered to them, and delivered them over to their relations. Three of the dragoons, in crossing the Platte opposite the Otoe village were drowned.

Aug. 4. Arrival of the *Antelope*. More whiskey landed.

6. An encounter lately took place between the Omahas and Sioux; originating in the stealing of a few horses by the latter. About forty are said to have been slain on both sides.

7. The son of the prophet of the Kickapoos killed the blacksmith of the nation. It is rumored that the white man was the aggressor.

8. Arrival of the *St. Peter's* with the annuities.

19. Annuities $90,000. Divided to the Indians. Great gala. Wonderful scrapings of traders to obtain their Indian credits.

20. Since the day of payment, drunkards are seen and heard in all places. Liquor is rolled out to the Indians by whole barrels; sold even by white men even in the presence of the agent. Wagon loads of the abominable stuff arrive daily from the settlements, and along with it the very dregs of our white neighbors and voyageurs of the mountains, drunkards,

gamblers, etc., etc. Three horses have been brought to the ground and killed with axes. Two more noses were bit off, and a score of other horrible mutilations have taken place. One has been murdered. Two women are dangerously ill of bad usage.

Sept. 15. Colonel Kearny arrived at Bellevue with 200 dragoons. Held council with the Iowas. Took four prisoners among the most distinguished for depredations on their white neighbors and missionaries. Preparations were made to whip them. The colonel reluctantly pardoned them at the intercession of their new agent, Mr. Hamilton, and after having previously consulted with experienced gentlemen living in this neighborhood. The Otoes came to the council in battle array, bows strung and arrows in hand, apparently ready for a blow. The manly conduct of the colonel, accompanied by great prudence and a great presence of mind, kept them in awe. I observed several chiefs tremble and stutter as they stood before him. Many who knew them well thought that great mischief was brewing.

A few days later, the son of old Pipestone was treacherously killed by a party of young men of his own nation. He had dared to make allusion in open council to the misconduct of the prisoners. * * * In a difference among themselves they burned most of their earthen wigwams. Otoes as bad as ever.

Oct. 15. Saw Mr. Merrill; looked very pale and sickly; was about selling out and removing. The Otoe blacksmith, Mr. Gilmore, left the Otoe station. Mr. Keis intends likewise to remove within the settlements. Made an improve-

> ment already on the Nishnabotna. Messrs. Allis, Curtis[3] and Dunbar are still in Bellevue, waiting for their respective flocks to become more steady and to settle permanently.

In the beginning of last November, two young Potawatomies, a grandson of old Blackfoot (who died last summer) and a son of old Miami, were killed on the head waters of the Des Moines. Not ascertained as yet whether the party were Sauks, Iowas, or Santees of the St. Peters river. Mr. Caldwell and family, P. Le Clair, the families La Framboise are all doing very well at present. There has been a great deal of sickness among the nation. I do not think that anybody escaped the fever. I had my first trial of it. * * * Mr. Harden's family well except little David who for some time past has been much subject to fits and fever. He is somewhat improving at present. Mrs. Scugin and her son Ramsay, Miss Henrietta, Messrs. Dick and Allen are below at Westport.

Dear friend, from the above statement you may easily gather, that our prospects are not so very bright and flattering, surrounded as we are by so many evils and obstacles, which all our efforts to the contrary are not able to stem. Indians are weak, laws disregarded, money a powerful temptation for the wicked white man and half-breed. We have not lost courage, however; a short sketch of our little mission will show that our endeavors have not been altogether fruitless and unavailing. We performed the ceremonies of marriage for twenty-three couples who have so far remained very steady and promised to remain so till death will part them for better or for worse. We baptized in all 242, among whom were upward of eighty adults, most of them half-breeds and some Indians. Forty have been admitted already to the Lord's Supper. Some I must own have slackened, attracted by the bad examples and occasions which surround them. Our chapel is tolerably well attended on Sundays. Most of the Indians are absent, being on their hunting expeditions. * * *

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[3] See previous note, page 154. "Mr. Curtis could preach a good sermon and probably would be useful in the states, where all was pleasant and agreeable, but did not succeed with the Indians."—*Allis.*

I made a trip last summer to the Sioux country, visited the Yanktons and Santees, joined two couples in lawful wedlock, baptized three adults and twenty-six children. I invited them in the names of our chiefs to come and smoke the calumet with them, and, while I write to you, we have forty of them in our bluffs, and of their bravest warriors, caroling together with the Potawatomies, and behaving towards each other like true brethren and friends. Last night they honored us with their great pipe-dance, and gave a serenade before every wigwam and cabin. They appeared to be very much pleased with all the people here.

I would have wished to have entered into many more particulars, but Pascal Miller [?] is waiting with impatience for my letter. * * * He leaves for the fort. More news, and better, I hope, by the next occasion. Remember me in your good prayers to the Lord. A kiss to my little dear Clarissa and to your son. * * * My best respects to your good lady. * * * Please remember me to the honorable Dr. James,[4] the true father and friend to the Indian. Father Verreydt, Mr. Caldwell, and Mr. Hardy's family send their best love to you. Farewell.

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[4] Possibly Edwin James, scientific member and historiographer of Long's expedition; who had previous to this time been agent to the Potawatomies.

CHAPTER IV.

EXCURSION TO THE SIOUX COUNTRY.[1]

First knowledge of the Sioux — Nicollet and Fremont — Acrobatic explorations — Notes on the country — Loss of vessel with mission supplies — Lights and shadows of life among the natives — Surreptitious baptism of children — Blackbird, the great Omaha chief — The recent smallpox epidemic — Honorable reception among the Yankton Sioux — Return downstream in a canoe — First experience of out-door life.

ON the 29th of April I went on board the American Company's steamboat, which makes every year the voyage from St. Louis to the Yellowstone river to furnish the Indians of those countries with whatever they need and bring down their furs in return. The year 1839 has been a very favorable one: they have obtained about 45,000 buffalo robes, besides an immense number of skins of deer, elk, antelope, beaver, otter, wildcats, etc. To my great joy I found on board the celebrated Mr. Nicollet,[2] whom I had had the honor of knowing for a long time. He is a French mathematician, well known in his own country, and I think in Belgium too, by literary men. This respectable gentleman has been traveling in the United States for seven or eight years.

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[1] Fragmental journal in French of voyage of Father De Smet in 1839, from Council Bluffs to the Sioux country. Hitherto unpublished.

[2] Jean Nicolas Nicollet, born Cluses, Savoy, July 24, 1786. Came to United States, 1832, to study physical geography of North America. Explored the southern states and the great basin of the Red, Arkansas and Missouri rivers. In 1836 to sources of the Mississippi. Determined position and elevation of many important points, and collected history and dialects of Indian nations and productions and natural history of the country. On his return to Washington he was engaged by the War Department to visit the far west and make a map and reports. He died in Washington September 11, 1843. See letters from him, pp. 1549 and 1552.

At present he is making a scientific excursion upon the upper Missouri, as he did last year to the sources of the Mississippi and its tributaries. He is accompanied by an American lieutenant [Fremont], a German botanist [Charles A. Geyer], very distinguished and tireless in his researches, and several guides. His works will be a treasure for the literary world. He is a very deeply learned man, and a solid Catholic at the same time, who examines his subject on the spot and spares neither time nor pains nor his purse to go to the bottom of the matters he writes upon. He made me a present of several instruments, thermometers, barometers, compass, etc., to take observations during the summer, to aid those he was making in the upper country.

The water of the river was very low and the snags and sand-bars very numerous everywhere, so our progress was slow and we had plenty of opportunities to make excursions in the woods and prairies and over the hills in search of minerals, petrifactions and rare and new plants, which abound in those regions. In a walk of this kind which I was taking with the botanist, he led me to the top of a hill 300 feet high. The path up which we went was quite practicable, but our descent in another place was different. I followed him, thinking that I could go where he had gone, but almost the first step I took, the slippery earth gave way under my feet, and I made a third of the descent at railroad speed. It seemed dangerous and impossible to return by the way I had come, and I found that the rest of the hillside was still steeper. Hung up there 200 feet above the river, I did not find myself very well fixed for meditation or reflection. But I took careful measures and partly by jumping from rock to rock and crawling from shrub to shrub, and partly on my hind-quarters without regard to my breeches, which felt this treatment deeply, I reached *terra firma* in safety. There the lover of Flora was already waiting for me, and being highly pleased with his discoveries he told me "that he did not think there was any pleasure on earth to be compared to an excursion of this kind." He was unconscious of the capers that I had been cutting. I answered him in German "that I had found the promenade fearfully pleasant." But I took good care afterwards not to follow Mister Florist except on flat country.

In the country of the Omahas I crossed a prairie three miles in width, full of onions of the size of a marble and very excellent for eating. In another we found a great deal of asparagus of the size of your thumb, which supplied the passengers for four days. Everywhere there was abundance of strawberries, blackberries, gooseberries and plums, nuts of various kinds, cherries and grapes: the fruit of the red and black thorn also appeared to be quite plentiful.

The marks which particularly characterize the immense Missouri are: its muddy water, thin [*leger*] and wholesome, and its swift and winding current, lined with islands of various sizes formed by the sediment brought down by the stream, and the aspect of which changes continually. Its course is between two banks which now traverse a level plain of either forest or prairie, containing perhaps thousands of acres and rising ten, twenty or thirty feet above the water, and now rise majestically from its edge to a height of 300 to 400 feet, with promontories which, when the mists of evening descend upon the landscape, make the impression of lofty mountains seen at a distance. These hills lie along both banks of the river at a distance of six to fifteen miles. The windings of the river present lovely views every moment, but the regular succession of bluffs and bottoms give such a sameness to the country that unless one were very familiar with the region he could never tell in which one of a dozen precisely similar spots he found himself. The Author of nature seems to have chosen to divert himself by repeating over and over the first forms that he applied to this charming and fertile land.

All the country as you ascend the river seems evidently to be of volcanic formation. In several places moreover you can see steam and sulphurous flames escaping from the bosom of the earth. I learned from a traveler who has been all over this region for a number of years, that subterranean noises are often heard, resembling those of volcanic districts.

Very kind Mother:[8]

I received your letter of March 13th, with all your good news of Termonde, even that Charles Geyzel is made Vicar. Doubtless he will be a good vicar. All your communications give me great pleasure and consolation. I do not forget my native place. Continue, therefore, to send me very frequently the most minute details. All that a Termontois can learn of that point of the globe, even when he finds himself in an American desert, 2,000 miles away, amid Indians and wild beasts, is always charming to him. Indeed, the reception of your letter was a holiday for me.

What shall I say to you, Mother, on all that you write me of the present state of your house, and of the good Marolles whom the Lord destines to take care of so many poor and miserable, under the direction of your worthy director? Ah! I assure you, I bless God for it, in the sincerity of my heart. If he deigns to hear me, he will keep you all, your orphan boys and girls, your old men and your children, beneath his powerful and holy grace. It is my ardent and daily prayer before the altar.

I thank you all, teachers and pupils, that you do not forget me, above all, in your prayers. I hope you will continue to implore the Blessed Virgin to protect our poor missions, and obtain for us, from her Divine Son, who can refuse her naught, the grace and strength necessary to overcome the numerous obstacles which separate the savage from the path of salvation.

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[8] Written to the Superior of the Orphanage of Termonde. Sent by her in December, 1856, to the editor of the *Précis Historiques*, Brussels, at the latter's request and with Father De Smet's permission, and published as letter XXVIII of the *Cinquante Nouvelles Letters, XXV of the Western Missions and Missionaries.* Dated Potawatomi Nation, St. Joseph [Mission], July, 1838. The date should be 1839.

You no doubt expect a little recital from the depth of our wilderness. Well, I will exhibit to you the light and the shade. It is just that you who pray so much for us should know somewhat of the exact state of our affairs. Your prayers for us, I am sure, will, if possible, increase in fervor.

First I will narrate to you the great loss that we experienced towards the end of April. Our Superior sent us, from St. Louis, goods to the amount of $500, in ornaments for the church, a tabernacle, a bell, and provisions and clothes for a year. I had been for a long time without shoes, and from Easter we were destitute of supplies. All the Potawatomi nation were suffering from scarcity, having only acorns and a few wild roots for their whole stock of food. At last, about the 20th of April, they announced to us that the much-desired boat was approaching. Already we saw it from the highest of our hills. I procured, without delay, two carts to go for our baggage. I reached there in time to witness a very sad sight. The vessel had struck on a sawyer, was pierced, and rapidly sinking in the waves.[4] The confusion that reigned in the boat was great, but happily no lives were lost. The total damage was valued at $40,000. All the provisions forwarded by Government to the savages were on board of her. Of our effects, four articles were saved: a plough, a saw, a pair of boots and some wine. Providence was still favorable to us. With the help of the plough, we were enabled to plant a large field of corn; it was the season for furrowing. We are using the saw to build a better house and enlarge our church, already too small. With my boots I can walk in the woods and prairies without fear of being bitten by the serpents which throng there. And the wine permits us to offer to God every day the most holy sacrifice of the mass, a privilege that had been denied us during a long time. We therefore returned with courage and resignation to the acorns and roots until the 30th of May. That day another boat arrived. By that same steamer, I received news from you, as well as a letter from my family and from the good Carmelite superior.

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[4] This must have been the annual boat of the American Fur Company to the mouth of the Yellowstone. The name cannot be identified from the "*List of Steamboat Wrecks on the Missouri River,*" in the Annual Report of the Missouri River Commission for 1897. From the preceding fragment the boat would seem to have been raised.

Our congregation already amounts to about 300. At Easter we had fifty candidates for the first communion. I recommend, in a very special manner, these poor Indians, that they maintain their fervor. The dangers and scandals which surround them are very great. I have remarked in one of my preceding letters that one of the principal obstacles to the conversion of the savages is drinking. The last boat brought them a quantity of liquors. Already fourteen among them are cut to pieces in the most barbarous manner, and are dead. A father seized his own child by the legs and crushed it, in the presence of its mother, by dashing it against the post of his lodge. Two others most cruelly murdered an Indian woman, a neighbor of ours, and mother of four children. We live in the midst of the most disgusting scenes.

The passion of the savages for strong drink is inconceivable. They give horses, blankets, all, in a word, to have a little of this brutalizing liquid. Their drunkenness only ceases when they have nothing more to drink. Some of our neophytes have not been able to resist this terrible torrent, and have allowed themselves to be drawn into it. I wrote an energetic letter to the Government against these abominable traffickers. Join your prayers to our efforts to obtain from Heaven the cessation of this frightful commerce, which is the misery of the savages in every relation.[5]

I visit the Indians in their wigwams, either as a missionary, if they are disposed to listen to me, or as a physician to see their sick. When I find a little child in great danger, and I perceive the parents have no desire to hear the word of God, I spread out my *vials:* I recommend my medicines strongly. I first bathe the child with a little camphor; then taking some baptismal water, I baptize it without their suspecting it — and thus I have opened the gate of heaven to a great number, notwithstanding the wiles of hell to hinder them from entering.

During the winter a chief of a neighboring nation brought me his child, attacked with a very dangerous malady; it only had a breath of life remaining. The father asked medicine from me. I gave him to understand that his child was past recovery, but that I had the means of rendering it, after death, the happiest of his nation. I explained to him the favors arising from the sacrament of baptism. The chief, quite delighted, offered me his son in order to secure its happiness, and the child died on the following day.

I might cite you a great number of other consoling traits with which Heaven favors us, but my sheet is too small to allow of it.

I will consecrate this last page to a description of the principal incidents of my excursion of 360 miles farther into the Indian Territories, through the country of the Omahas, and in the immense tract of country occupied by the Sioux.

The object of this journey was to afford the benefit of baptism to some children, to give adults some ideas of our holy religion, and to establish a durable and advantageous peace between the two nations. Our savages have lived, during the last two years, in a terrible dread of this numerous and warlike nation; lately, also, two of our people had been massacred.

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[5] Father De Smet here touches upon one of the greatest evils that has characterized the relations of the white man with the Indian under the United States Government, from the beginning until very recent times. In spite of all its efforts the Government was never able to suppress what the author very justly describes as an "abominable traffic."

I embarked on the Missouri, the 29th of April, [1839] in a steamboat [the *St. Peter's*]. I met on board, to my great joy, two old friends: the one a French mathematician, Mr. Nicollet, a very learned and pious man; the other, Mr. [Chas. A.] Geyer, a German. These gentlemen are making a scientific excursion of 4,500 miles into the Indian countries. The waters of the river were low; the sand-banks and the sawyers very numerous and difficult to pass; the winds strong and contrary. Our progress was very slow. We had many an opportunity to make excursions in the woods and prairies, searching for new minerals, which abound in these wilds, and rare and curious plants, among which we made some beautiful discoveries. I thought of you, my good mother, when I found myself in those beautiful parterres. I imagined once for an instant, that you were there, with your children. I heard your exclamations: "*Potten, potten, kinderen! Wel, wel!* * * * *Dat zijn schoone bloemen! Wie zoude het konnen gelooven?* * * * *Maar ziet, maar ziet!* * * * *Komt hier, moeder; hier heb ik eene schoone,*"[*] etc., etc. Indeed it was truly the most beautiful view one could fancy. When the bell called us back to the steamer, I quitted those little parks of wild flowers with much difficulty. I gathered a great number of plants which I preserved in my herbal. We passed over several spots where there were only onions, round, and about as large as the marbles children use for play, but excellent for eating. In another place we gathered a great quantity of asparagus, as thick as a man's thumb. All the passengers of the steamboat regaled themselves with it during four days. I will tell you nothing of our little encounters with the wolves and the serpents; that would dispel the charm.

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[*] "Children, get some vases! Well, well! Those are pretty flowers! Who would have thought it? Just look! Here, Mother, here is a pretty one."

On the route, I instructed and baptized, on the vessel, a woman with her three children, and heard the confessions of a great number of Canadian voyageurs, who were going to the Rocky Mountains.

A tomb attracts attention in these regions; it is the tomb of Blackbird, the great chief of the Omahas. This chief became celebrated by the ascendancy which he possessed over his nation; he was an object of terror and respect to his people, for they believed that he could control life and death. The origin of their belief is as follows: he had procured a large quantity of arsenic, by the aid of a trader; the latter at the same time instructed him in the method of using it; but the wretch soon received his recompense. Blackbird invited him to dine with him on a day appointed, and adroitly administered to him a good dose of his terrible medicine. The trader, to the great pleasure of his host, died some hours after, in frightful torments.

Proud of his attempt, Blackbird soon meditated a perfidious blow, and made great preparation for its execution. He dispatched a party of his people to the chase, so as to kill some deer and buffalo for his banquet. The principal warriors and the minor chiefs had become jealous of the ascendancy that the great chief exercised for some time over the nation. Blackbird, informed of their discontent and murmurs, invited to his feast every one of his warriors who had murmured. He lavished his attentions upon them, and showed the most distinguished marks of cordiality to his guests, wishing apparently to be reconciled with them, and to efface the bad impression that his hard-heartedness and haughty bearing had caused. As soon as each one had emptied his plate, and the poison had begun to act on some, he threw off the mask, and began to harangue them on the great power of his manitou or genius which guided him, and, brandishing his tomahawk in triumph, bade them, with sarcasm and bitterness, "to intone their death songs, if any warlike blood yet circled in their veins;" adding with the accent of revenge "that before the sun's rising" — it was night — "the vultures would fly above their wigwams, and that their wives and children would mourn over their lifeless corpses." It was a night of confusion, tears, fear and tumult. No one escaped the poison!

The whole life of this man was a chain of crimes and cruelties. Tired of "pouring out blood" as the Indians say, or rather pursued by remorse and despair, he allowed himself to die with hunger. Before expiring, he gave orders to his faithful warriors to bury him on the highest of the hills, an elevation of 300 feet, seated on his most beautiful courser, facing the impetuous Missouri — "so that," said he, "I can salute all the voyageurs." His tomb resembles a little hillock. It is surmounted by a pole, to which the Indians attach a flag. It can be easily distinguished eighteen miles off.[7]

Our boat passed near the village of the Omahas, composed of about 1,400 souls. It is situated at the extremity of a beautiful prairie, about three miles in extent, at the foot of a little range of hills. No one came to the shore to see us pass,— fearing, it seems, that the smallpox was on board, and might be introduced among them. Only two years ago [1837], by an unpardonable imprudence of the captain, this disease was introduced into the Indian country by the same vessel, [*St. Peter's*] and produced ravages frightful and unheard-of in Indian annals. Twenty-five or thirty thousand died in a few weeks. Of 1,200 men of the tribe of the Mandans, only seven families escaped the contagion. About eighty warriors of this little nation committed suicide in the days of calamity, some in despair at the loss of their children and friends, others through fear of becoming the slaves of their enemies, and the greater number saying that they were horrified at the idea of seeing their bodies corrupted while yet alive.[8]

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[7] The story of Blackbird is a famous one in the history of the western Indians. It has been best told by Washington Irving in his *Astoria*. The hill on which the grave rests is a prominent one on the west shore of the river. Twenty-five miles distant, on a high hill on the east shore, stands an obelisk, 100 feet high, over the grave of the first American pioneer to die in this region — Sergeant Charles Floyd of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, who died and was buried here August 20, 1804. These two graves practically in sight of each other, have a deep historic significance, denoting, as they do, the advent into this region of one race and the exit of another.

On the 11th of May I reached my destination, and quitted with regret my four new children in Christ and my two friends. It would have been very gratifying to me to have accompanied these two gentlemen in their lengthy course, if my health and circumstances would have allowed me, so as to visit the numerous nations of the mountains.

On my arrival among the Sioux, the chiefs and warriors of the tribe of Yanktons invited me to feast. All were seated in a circle in a grand lodge or tent of buffalo hides. Each one rested his chin on his knees, the legs drawn close up to the body, a position that my corpulency would not allow me to assume. I therefore seated myself like a tailor on his table, with my legs crossed. Every one received a big piece of venison in a wooden trencher; those who cannot finish their portion are permitted to take away — it is their custom — the remains of the dish. I was among this number, and I had enough left for two days. I observed at this feast that when a savage had finished his dish, he rubbed his belly and breast with his two hands in sign of satisfaction, and thanked his host for having so well regaled him.

The repast concluded, I disclosed to them the principal object of my visit among them, viz: a durable peace between the Sioux and the Potawatomies their neighbors. Having discussed the different points and refuted the false reports that divided the two nations, I persuaded the Sioux to make some presents to the children of such of our Potawatomies as they had killed, which is called *covering the dead,* and to come and smoke with them the calumet of peace. The feast and the council were terminated with the most perfect cordiality. The same evening I gave them an instruction on the Apostles' Creed, and I baptized a great number of their little children. This nation, dispersed over a wide extent, reckons 32,000 souls.

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[8] For a history of this terrible scourge, see *American Fur Trade of the Far West*, p. 619.

The evening before I left a number of the savages came to honor me with the calumet dance.

The object of my voyage being obtained, I seized the first opportunity of returning to my mission. The savages, besides, had already struck camp to follow the bison, which were moving away. My vessel, this time, was a tree hollowed out, which is called a canoe, ten feet in length by one and a half in width. I could just seat myself in it. Before this, I had crossed the river in this sort of craft, but never without fear, it being evidently very dangerous; now I had 360 miles to descend on the most perilous and most impetuous of rivers, and it was necessary, for I had no other way. Happily I was accompanied by two very skilful pilots, who, paddling on the right and left, darted with the fleetness of an arrow through the numerous sawyers with which the river was filled, the frail bark which the slightest shock could overturn. Judge how swift its course is: in three days, sailing from four o'clock in the morning until sunset, we had passed over 120 leagues. Two nights only I slept in the open air, having no bed but my buffalo robe, and no pillow but my traveling-bag. Yet I can assure you that my slumbers were as peaceable and profound as I ever enjoyed in my life. A good appetite, for the air on the water is fresh, prepared us for three excellent meals each day. My companions were well provided with bread, butter, coffee and sugar; game was also abundant, and we had but to select. I never saw so many ducks, geese, bustards, swans and wild turkeys, in such a short trip.

We made our evening soup with the muddy water of the Missouri, which gave the meat the singular appearance of having been seasoned with mud. It was, however, thanks to our appetites, excellent, notwithstanding this, and soup and meat swiftly disappeared.

At our last encampment, attracted without doubt by the sight of the fire which sparkled at our feet, a noble stag approached us, stamping with his feet — a little more and we might have had our skulls broken in by this enraged animal. It aroused the pilot, who, seizing the gun that was lying beside me, discharged it about two inches from my ear. This report awaked me suddenly, without, however, frightening me.

During my route, except the Sioux, I saw only one Indian hunter, and one single village, that of the Omahas. What a contrast with the beautiful, little and populous Belgium![*] The huts of the Omahas are built of earth, and are conical; their circumference at the base, 120 to 140 feet. To construct them, they plant in the ground long and thick poles, bend and join together all the ends, which are fastened to about twenty posts in the inside. These poles are afterwards covered with bark, over which they put earth about a foot in depth, and then cover the whole with turf. They look like small mounds. A large hole in the summit permits light to enter and smoke to escape. The fire-place is in the center and every hut holds from six to ten families.

A young French Creole conducted his wife to me, to have her instructed in our holy religion. He came down with her quite recently from beyond the Rocky Mountains, a distance of eleven or twelve hundred leagues. The recital that she gives me of the life led by her nation, the Ampajoots [Yampah Utes?] is truly heartrending. The soil is one of the most ungrateful; they have no game at all. If they hazard leaving their country, their more numerous neighbors kill them without mercy. They are without clothes, without habitations, and roam like wild animals in the prairies, where they live on roots, grasshoppers and large ants. They crush the last-named insects between two stones, and make a species of cake with them, which they cook in the sun or before a fire, to regale themselves with after. This poor Indian woman, aged about twenty-five years, *had never eaten meat.* Her astonishment was excessive when she first saw chickens, pigs, cows and oxen, with other domestic fowls and animals, running about our dwellings. As soon as she is sufficiently instructed to receive baptism, I will name her Isabella, and you shall be her godmother. Therefore do not forget the poor Ampajoot in your prayers.

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[*] Scarcely greater than would be the contrast with this same country to-day where within a radius of ten miles of Father De Smet's starting point on this journey are now a quarter of a million people.

Your letter that you mentioned, dated July, did not reach me. The distance is about 2,000 miles, and the dangers are great. My letter to the Carmelites is about the same as this.

PART II.

THE FLATHEAD MISSION.

Itinerary for the Years 1840, 1841 *and* 1842.

1840.

FATHER DE SMET left St. Louis by steamer March 27th and went as far as Westport where he joined the American Fur Company caravan under Andrew Drips[1] — Left Westport by land April 30th — Followed the usual route across the country to the Platte and up that stream past Fort Laramie, Independence Rock and South Pass[2] — Arrived at the fur company rendezvous June 30th where he met the advance guard of the Flatheads sent out to meet him — In company with the Flatheads he continued his route via the head of Green river; across the divide to Jackson's Little Hole on the head of Hoback river; down the valley of that stream to the Snake river; across the Snake at the lower end of Jackson Hole; across Teton Pass, and into the valley called Pierre's Hole, where he met the main camp of the Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles and Nez Percés about July 12th.

Continued his route in company with the Indians up Henry Fork of Snake river to Henry lake July 22d; across the Divide to Red Rock lake (Mosquito lake of the trappers), the ultimate source of the Missouri; down the Stinking Water river to its confluence with the Beaver Head river, and down the latter to Jefferson Fork which they descended to the junction of the Three Forks where the Missouri proper takes its source; August 21st.

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[1] A distinguished trader of the American Fur Company, and later Indian agent for the tribes of the upper Missouri.

[2] The most noted pass across the Continental Divide. It lay between the source of the Sweetwater river in the Missouri watershed and Big Sandy river, a tributary of Green river, itself the main tributary of the Colorado of the West.

After a brief sojourn here, he bade adieu to the Indians, and with a small escort, started August 27th on his return to St. Louis — Ascended the east fork of the Gallatin; crossed what is now called Bozeman Pass, between the valleys of the upper Missouri and Yellowstone; descended the Yellowstone along the left bank and met the Crow Indians in the Big Horn valley, some distance above the mouth of that stream — After some delay he pursued his journey down the Big Horn to the Yellowstone and down the latter stream to the mouth of the Rosebud where he crossed to Fort Alexander — Bidding good-bye to the inmates of the fort and to the Indians, he and a single companion set out down the Yellowstone along the left bank; crossed the Missouri at the mouth of the Yellowstone and arrived at Fort Union.

Leaving Fort Union September 23d, he made his way by land down the Missouri, visiting Forts Clark, Pierre (October 17th) and Vermillion — At Vermillion he took a canoe but was stopped by ice at St. Joseph Mission near Council Bluffs — Thence (December 14th) he traveled by horse back to Independence, and thence to St. Louis by stage, arriving December 31st.

Distance traveled, 4,814 miles.

1841.

Father De Smet left St. Louis April 24th for the Rocky Mountains, accompanied by two fathers and three brothers of the Society — Left Westport May 10th — The route followed was practically the same as that of 1840 as far as South Pass (July 7th) — Thence they followed the route of the Oregon trail via Bear river, Soda Springs (August 13th), across the dividing ridge and down the Portneuf river to Fort Hall on the banks of the Snake.

Left Fort Hall August 19th — Crossed the Snake river and traversed the desert in the vicinity of the Three Buttes — Continued north to the Continental Divide and crossed it about on the present line of the Oregon Short Line railroad — Entered the Beaver Head valley (August 30th) where the Flatheads were found encamped — Recrossed the Divide into the valley of Deer Lodge creek near the well-known hot springs in that vicinity — Descended the Deer Lodge creek and Hellgate river to its junction with the Bitter Root where Missoula now stands — Ascended the Bitter Root valley about thirty miles and commenced the Mission of St. Mary's, September 24th.

Set out to Fort Colville for provisions October 28th — Went to Flathead lake — Thence down the Flathead river to its junction with Missoula river; thence down Clark's Fork, passing Camas Plains, Horse Plains, and a dense forest of cedar and pine which it took four days to traverse — Passed by Pend d'Oreille lake, which he called Kalispel lake — Thence to Lake Kalispel called by him Lake de Boey — Crossed the mountains to Mill creek, and descended its valley to Fort Colville on the Columbia where he arrived November 15th.

After three days spent in procuring provisions and tools Father De Smet returned by practically the same route and arrived at St. Mary's Mission December 8th.

Distance traveled, 2,323 miles.

1842.

"In the spring of this year [about April 10th] I set out from St. Mary's to visit Fort Vancouver and the Willamette valley to confer with the Governor of the Hudson Bay Company and with the Very Reverend Mr. Blanchet, administrator of Oregon, upon the present and future interests of our missions in the mountains" — Went by way of Flathead lake and the route of the previous year most of the way arrived at Fort Colville "in the beginning of

May" — Met a Kootenai band near the head of Flathead lake — At the Bay of the Kalispels he was invited by the Cœur d'Alènes to visit their country and he accordingly made a detour to Cœur d'Alène lake where the Indians were encamped — Remained several days in their country — Passed by the site of the modern Spokane City and thence to the sources of Mill creek, which he descended all the way to Fort Colville.

May 30th embarked in a skiff on the Columbia — Five men drowned in a rapid a little above Fort Okinagan — Stopped at Fort Okinagan — Visited Fort Walla Walla and the Protestant mission at the Dalles — Passed the Dalles by boat but portaged around the Cascades — Arrived safely at Fort Vancouver on the morning of June 8th — Ascended the Willamette valley to the Willamette Falls and thence to the mission of St. Paul which was Reverend Blanchet's residence.

Having completed his business with Blanchet and McLoughlin, Father De Smet set out on his return journey June 30th — Ascended the Columbia as far as Fort Walla Walla — Thence northerly across the Nez Percé and Spokan deserts to the Cœur d'Alène lake — Thence via St. Joseph river and over the mountains to Missoula river, and thence up the Bitter Root to St. Mary's Mission.

Father De Smet had been strongly advised by the Reverend Blanchet, Governor McLoughlin and others to return to the United States for personal and material succor for the missions, and accordingly, after arranging for the commencement of two new residences, one among the Kalispels of the Bay and another among the Cœur d'Alènes, he made preparations for departure.

Accompanied by two Indians to serve as guides and hunters, Father De Smet set out on his journey July 29th — Ascended the Bitter Root to its source — Crossed the Divide to the headwaters of the Big Hole — August 2d to August 15th spent in the plain of the Three Forks with the Flatheads who were on a buffalo hunt — August 16th set out for St. Louis — Followed practically the same route as in 1840 — Left Fort Alexander about August 25th, and arrived at Fort Union about September 10th — Set out in a skiff for St. Louis but on third day out met steamboat and went on board — Was forty-six days making the down trip and arrived in St. Louis the last Sunday in October.

Distance traveled, 4,529 miles.

CHAPTER I.

ST. LOUIS TO GREEN RIVER RENDEZVOUS.[1]

Steamboat journey to Westport — Passengers and scenery — Start overland with Fur Company caravan — Kansas Indians — Chills and fever — The picturesque Platte — Antelope, prairie-dogs, buffalo and wolves — Chimney Rock — Camp of the Cheyennes on Laramie Fork — Boiled dog — First view of the Rocky Mountains — Red Butte — Sweetwater river — Independence Rock — South Pass.

NO doubt you are looking for some interesting details of my long, very long, journey from St. Louis to the other side of the Rocky Mountains. It took me sixty days to cross the famous American desert, and nearly four months to effect my return by a new and very hazardous road.

Sent out by the right reverend bishop and by my provincial, to gain knowledge of the disposition of the savages and of the success that might probably be looked for from founding a mission among them, I left St. Louis[2] on the 27th of March, 1840, in a steamboat, and ascended the Missouri a distance of 500 [390] miles to reach the state frontier. The craft on which I had embarked was (like all of them in this land, where emigration and commerce have grown to such an extent) encumbered with freight and passengers from every state of the Union; I may even say from the various nations of the earth, white, black, yellow and red, with shadings of all these colors. The boat was like a little floating Babel, on account of the different languages and jargons that were heard upon it. These passengers drop off here and there on the river, to open farms, construct mills, build factories of every kind; they increase day by day the number of the inhabitants of the little towns and villages that spring up as if by magic, on both sides of the river.

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[1] The text of the following two chapters is taken from the first 82 pages of the *Voyages aux Montagnes-Rocheuses* where it is addressed to M. le Chanoine Charles de la Croix (a former missionary to the Osage Indians) at Ghent, under date of February 4, 1841. Letter II of the *Letters and Sketches* is apparently a translation into English of another copy of the same letter, transmitted to the Father General (Roothaan) three days later; but much matter being omitted, the editors have preferred to follow the French copy.

[2] Accompanied by "Young" Ignace, of the fourth Flathead deputation; the other member, Peter Left Hand, having gone on ahead to announce their coming.

As we went on up, we found the country full of charm and interest, diversified with vertical rocks and very high clay hills, often cut-faced. The bottoms exhibit a great variety of trees and bushes, oaks, and walnuts of a dozen different species; the sassafras and the *acacia triacanthus,* whose flowers load the air with their delicious perfume; the maple, which is the first to clothe itself in the livery of spring; and the sycamore, king of the western forest, which erects itself in the most graceful forms, with vast spreading branches, covered with a brilliant white bark, and adds a distinctive note of grandeur to the imposing beauty of the woods. I have seen them fifteen feet and a half in diameter. The cottonwood, (*populus deltoides,*) is another giant, growing to a prodigious height: the *bignonia radicans* seems to prefer it to all others, climbs to its very top and lets loose a profusion of great flame-colored trumpet-shaped blossoms. Here the traveler is struck by the thousand lofty columns of the cottonwood, enveloped, from the ground to the branches, by a drapery of dark green vines. It is one of nature's charms that one never wearies of contemplating.[8]

The dogwood, (*cornus florida,*) and the redbud, (*cercis canadensis,*) fill the gap betwixt tree and shrub. The first has a handsome heart-shaped leaf and spreads out its branches like an umbrella: in spring they are covered with brilliant white flowers: in the fall they exhibit lovely scarlet berries. The other is the first shrub that one sees in blossom the length of the Missouri.

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[8] Father De Smet does not overstate the natural beauty of the lower Missouri valley. With its lofty bluffs of white limestone, its varied and luxuriant foliage, and its rich cultivated bottom land, it exhibits one of the most perfect examples of landscape beauty to be found anywhere.

These shrubs are scattered everywhere throughout the woods, and in the earliest spring their masses of brilliant flowers form a delicate contrast with the dominant brown of the forest. The redbud gives to the landscape a charm that the traveler who sees it for the first time can never forget. The wild cherry, mulberry and ash are very common. In all these bottoms the soil is prodigiously rich, and strongly impregnated with saline substances and decomposed limestones.

The banks, however, are very unstable and crumble continually: which renders the river water, otherwise very pure and wholesome, muddy and disgusting as a drink. Sandbars and submerged trees are so numerous that one becomes used to them and scarcely thinks of the risks that he is running every minute. It is interesting to observe how deep the roots thrust themselves into this fertile soil; where the bank has crumbled you may observe the whole length of them; as a rule there is only one main tap root, which penetrates ten or twelve feet, with other smaller ones round about it.

After ten days' navigation, I reached Westport,[4] a little

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[4] *Independence* and *Westport*, progenitors of the present Kansas City. Independence was the older of the two towns. It was located on the 29th of March, 1827. Its early growth was largely due to the Sante Fe trade.

The rise of Westport so close to Independence was due to the caprices of the Missouri river. That erratic stream destroyed the steamboat landing of Independence. Farther up stream there was a stable bank and here the steamboats went. The place was called Westport landing, and was the true beginning of the future Kansas City. Westport itself was back some distance from the landing. It was laid out in 1833 and grew rapidly, diverting much of the trade from Independence.

The early life of both of these towns depended almost entirely upon town on the Indian frontier, whence I was to strike out for the mountains. On the 30th of April, [1840] I set out from Westport with the annual expedition of the American Fur Company, [Captain Andrew Drips][5] which was on its way to Green river, one of the branches of the Colorado. Until the 17th of May we traveled westward over immense plains, destitute of trees or shrubs, except along the streams, and broken by deep ravines, where our voyageurs lowered and raised the carts by means of ropes. The heat of summer was already commencing to make itself felt; still the weather was favorable; often the thermometer would be as low as 27° in the morning, though it might rise to 90 by noon. The strong winds that prevail unceasingly in these vast plains make the heat supportable. Game was scarce; still my hunter supplied my tent abundantly with ducks, snipe, prairie-chickens, cranes, pigeon, badgers, deer and antelope.

The only men that I met in these first days were some Kansas Indians, who were on their way to Westport to sell their peltries. They dwell upon the Kansas river. Their territory begins sixty miles west of the state of Missouri, and their villages are at a distance of eighty miles. Their language, customs and manners are the same as those of the Osages.

In peace and in war, these two nations unite their interests, and form, so to speak, a single nation of some 1,700 souls. They live in villages, wherein their huts, which may be made of bark, like the wigwams of the Potawatomies, or of rushes like those of the Osages, or of earth like the *akosos* of the Pawnees and Otoes, are placed at random and

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the trade along the Oregon and Santa Fe trails, and that with the numerous tribes of Indians located in the surrounding country. Both were outstripped at a later date by Kansas City, which was laid out in 1838.

[5] Andrew Drips, born in Pennsylvania, 1789, died Kansas City, September 1, 1860. In the fur trade at least as early as 1820; member of Missouri and American Fur Companies; trader at Bellevue; Indian agent under President Tyler.

without order. These last are round and shaped like a cone; the wall is near three feet thick; the whole work is supported within by sundry posts. In all their huts, the hard ground is the floor; the fire-place is in the middle and the smoke escapes through a hole arranged in the summit. The door is so low and narrow that one can enter only by crawling; it consists merely of a dried skin hung up. These savages seemed to me very poor and miserable. The greater part of them were on foot; just before we met them, the Otoes had stolen twenty-five of their horses. They expressed an ardent longing to have a mission of our fathers among them.

As we advanced toward the west, we crossed elevated ridges, which now and then gave us extensive and very beautiful views. The great plain was dotted with groves of old and large trees; especially noticeable was the *wakarusa,* or cottonwood,[6] a plant which is abundant in this region, and on which the Indians feed. It is found along a river that bears the same name, and which flows into the Kansas. Both these rivers have rich and fertile bottoms and are well wooded. All the summit of the Divide is full of petrifactions. The surface of the earth over a considerable part of this region is covered with great flat grey and yellow stones, lying in confusion as if they had been brought forth from the bosom of the earth by some subterranean agitation.

I had been no more than six days in the wilderness, when I was overcome by intermittent fever, with the chills that ordinarily precede the attacks of heat. This fever never left me until I reached the Yellowstone, on my way back from the mountains. I cannot give you any idea of my deplorable state. My friends advised me to go back; but my desire of seeing the nations of the mountains prevailed over all their good reasons. I therefore followed the caravan as best I could, sticking on my horse as long as I had the strength; after that I would go and lie in a cart on the boxes, where I was jolted about like a malefactor; very often we would have to cross deep and perpendicular ravines, throwing me into the most singular positions; now my feet would be in the air, now I would find myself hidden like a thief between boxes and bundles, cold as an icicle or covered with sweat and burning like a stove. You might add that during the three days when my fever was at its highest, I had no water but what was stagnant and dirty.

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[6] *Waggère-roussé, ou la fleur du cotonnier.* [Wakarusa is commonly said to mean "hip deep."]

On the 18th of May, after crossing a beautiful plain thirty miles in width, we arrived upon the banks of the Nebraska[7] or Deer river (rivière au Cerf), which the French designate by the less appropriate name of Platte, or Rivière Plate. The Platte is the chief tributary of the Missouri, and may be considered the most wonderful and most useless of the rivers of North America; for it is 2,000 yards in width from one bank to the other, and its depth is seldom more than two to six feet; the bottom is quicksand. It comes from an immense distance, through a wide and green valley, and receives the great abundance of its waters from various branches that come down from the Rocky Mountains. The mouth of this river is 800 [650] miles from St. Louis by water, and forms the dividing point between the Lower and the Upper Missouri. I was often struck with admiration at sight of the picturesque scenes which we enjoyed all the way up the Platte. Think of the big ponds that you have seen in the parks of European noblemen, dotted with little wooded islands; the Platte offers you these by thousands, and of all shapes. I have seen groups of these islands that one might easily take, from a distance, for fleets under sail, garlanded with verdure and festooned with flowers; and the rapid flow of the river past them made them seem to be flying over the water, this appearance of motion completing the charm of the illusion. Neither bank of the river is wooded; the trees which the isles chiefly produce are a species of white poplar, commonly called cottonwoods; the savages cut them down in winter and the bark serves as fodder for their horses.

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[7] Father De Smet's explanation of the meaning of "Nebraska" (*r. au Cerf* in French, Big Horn in English version) is unique. All the early explorers accounted for it as an Indian equivalent for "shallow water," French *la Platte*. Many geographical names for streams, derived from Siouan languages, contain the root "ne" or "minne:" Minnehaha (laughing water), Nehawka (weeping water), Niobrara (running water), Nemaha (river of the Omahas), etc. It is said, however, that *nebra-ska* means "fine white sand," such as flies from the bars of the Platte and Missouri, in the Sioux language.

Antelope are very plentiful in the plain of the Platte; I have often seen several hundred in sight at one time. It is the most agile animal of the prairies. Hunters make use of a trick to come near him: they run at him full gallop, and the animal is off like a flash, leaving the horseman far behind; but soon it stops to look at him, being a very curious creature; meanwhile the hunter dismounts and lays himself flat on the ground; here he makes all kinds of flourishes with his arms and legs, now and then waving his handkerchief, or a red cap, on the end of his ramrod. The antelope draws slowly near, to watch and investigate him; and as soon as it is within gunshot, the hunter fires and lays it low. Often one will get as many as six before the band scatters. Other animals are rare in this region, but there are evident indications that game has not always been lacking.

For several days' journeys, we found the whole plain covered with buffalo bones and skulls arranged in circles or half-moons and painted with various devices. It is in the midst of these skulls that the Pawnees are wont to practice their superstitious divinations, when they go forth to war or to the chase. After a long sea-voyage, the sailor rejoices at the sight of floating weeds, or of some little land birds that may alight for rest on the ship's cordage, sure signs to him that the end of his voyage is near. Even so in this desert, the traveler, wearied of living so long on salt meat, is rejoiced at sight of these weather-bleached bones, which announce to him the vicinity of the buffalo. Nothing, accordingly, but shouts of joy was heard in our camp; our hunters perceived that the buffalo plains were not far off, and they saluted with noisy cheers the hope of soon spreading destruction among those peaceful herds.

In these same places we found moreover the *wistonwish* of the Indians, the prairie-dog, more accurately called by the voyageurs the American squirrel. These animals appear to have a kind of civil government established in their society. Their towns are generally located on the slope of a hill, sometimes near a little lake or stream; but more often far from any water, that the earth in which they dwell may not be exposed to floods. They are of an earthy brown color, except the belly, which is white; their tail is not so long as that of the grey squirrel, but they have exactly the same form; the teeth, the head, the claws and the body are perfect squirrel, except that they are bigger and plumper than that animal. The voyageurs believe that their only food is the roots of the grass, and the dew of heaven their sole drink.

As we went on, we saw here and there the solitary burial-places of the Pawnees; probably those of some chiefs or warriors who had fallen in combat with their hereditary foes, the Sioux, Cheyennes or Osages. These tombs were adorned with buffalo skulls painted red; the body is put, in a sitting position, into a little cabin made of reeds and branches of trees, strongly interwoven to keep the wolves out. The face is daubed with vermilion, the body is covered with its finest war-ornaments, and beside it one sees provisions of every kind, dried meat, tobacco, powder and lead, gun, bow and arrows. For several years the families will come back every spring to renew these provisions. Their idea is that the soul hovers for a long time about the spot where the body reposes, before taking its flight to the land of souls.

After marching for seven days alongside the Platte, we reached the plains inhabited by the buffalo. I left the camp alone, very early one morning, to see them more at my ease; I approached them by way of the ravines, without showing myself or allowing them to get the wind of me. This is the most keen-scented of animals; he will detect the presence of a man at a distance of four miles, and take flight at once, since that odor is insupportable to him. I gained, without being perceived, a high bluff, resembling in shape the Waterloo monument; from it I enjoyed a view of perhaps a dozen miles. This vast plain was so covered with animals, that the markets or fairs of Europe could give you only the feeblest idea of it. It was indeed like a fair of the whole world assembled in one of its loveliest plains. I looked with wonder upon the slow and majestic walk of these heavy wild cattle, marching silently in single file, while others cropped with avidity the rich pasturage, which is called the short buffalo grass. Whole bands were lying amidst flowers on the grass; the scene altogether realized in some sort the ancient tradition of the holy scriptures, speaking of the vast pastoral countries of the Orient, and of the cattle upon a thousand hills.

I could not weary of gazing upon this delightful scene, and for two hours I watched these moving masses in the same state of astonishment. Suddenly the immense army seemed startled; one battalion gave the panic to another, and the whole multitude was in flight, running in every direction. The buffalo had caught the scent of their common enemy; the hunters had rushed among them on the gallop. The earth seemed to tremble under their steps, and the dull sounds that came back were like the mutterings of distant thunder. The hunters shot to right and left; they made a great slaughter among the fattest of these animals. I returned to camp with them. They had a number of horse-loads of tongues, humps, ribs, etc., all the rest being left to the wolves and vultures [turkey buzzard]. We camped not far from this scene of butchery, and every one in camp busied himself straightway about the cooking. There being no wood on the banks of the Platte, our people made use of the dry dung of the buffalo, which burns like peat. We were often obliged to have recourse to the same expedient in the prairies of the Black Hills.

In the middle of the night frightful sounds, howlings and barkings awoke me; one would have thought the four tribes of the Pawnees were assembled to dispute our passage over their territory. I woke my guide, to learn the cause of the noise, and that he might aid in resisting the enemy's attack. He laughed and answered, "Don't be scared; that is nothing. It is the wolves celebrating after their long winter's fast; they are feasting on the carcasses of the cows that the hunters have left on the prairie." Wolves are very numerous in this region. According to the Indians, they kill every year a third of the buffalo calves; often when they are in strong bands, they will even attack full-grown bulls or cows, hurling themselves all together upon a single buffalo, pulling him down very skilfully and devouring him.

To give you an idea of the great number of buffaloes upon the Missouri, I will here add that in this year of 1840, the Fur Company has brought down 67,000 robes to St. Louis. The number of buffalo that the savages of the Missouri kill for their own needs, for their tents, clothing and saddle-covers, is estimated, one year with another, at 100,000 besides this.

On the 28th, we forded the South Fork of the Platte. All this region, clear up to the great mountains, is a veritable barren, rocky and sandy, covered with scoria and other volcanic substances, with no fertile spots save on the rivers and creeks.

This region, says one modern traveler,[8] resembles the deserts of Asia with its vast undulating and treeless plains, and its uncultivated, sandy, lonely expanses, which weary the eye by their monotonous extent. It is a land wherein no man dwells; at certain seasons of the year, even the hunter and his horse lack food there. All herbage is burnt up; the rivers and creeks are dry; the buffalo, elk and deer withdraw to distant spots, keep upon the edge of the expiring verdure, and leave behind them only a vast uninhabited solitude, cut up by ravines and old beds of streams, which only serve now to torment the traveler and augment his thirst. At long intervals the monotony of this great desert is interrupted by heaps of stones, piled in confusion, like ruins; or perhaps it is traversed by ridges of rocks, rising up before the traveler like insurmountable barriers; such are the Black Hills. Beyond rise the Rocky Mountains, the boundaries of the Atlantic world. The gorges and valleys of this vast chain give a refuge to a great number of savage tribes, some of which are but the mutilated remainders of different peoples, formerly peaceful possessors of the prairies, now driven back by war into almost inaccessible defiles, where the spoiler ceases at length to pursue them.

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[8] Irving. This paragraph and the next are from chapter XXII of *Astoria*, very little modified.

It seems that this western desert, such as I have described it, must forever defy the industry of civilized man. There are perhaps some places, more fortunately situated upon the banks of rivers, where agriculture could be successfully practiced; others might be converted into grazing lands as fertile as those of the east; but it is to be feared that, with very little exception, this immense region is nothing more than an ocean between civilization and barbarism, where bands of malefactors, organized like the caravans of the Arabs, may work their depredations with impunity. Some day perhaps it may be the cradle of a new people, composed of the old savage races and of this class of adventurers, of the fugitive and the banished, thrust out from the bosom of society, a heterogeneous and menacing population, which the American Union is piling up like a sinister cloud upon its frontiers, increasing continually its strength and its irritation by transporting whole tribes of Indians from their birthplace on the banks of the Mississippi, into the places of exile assigned them among these western solitudes. These savages bring with them an implacable hatred of the whites, who, they say, have driven them from their own country, far from the burial-places of their fathers, that they may take unjust possession of their heritage. If some of these tribes should some day form into hordes like the nomadic peoples, half shepherd, half warrior, who range the plateaus of Asia with their herds, is it not to be feared that in time others may organize themselves into bands of robbers and assassins, with the swift horses of the prairies for coursers, the desert for the theater of their brigandage, and inaccessible rocks for a safe refuge for their lives and their booty?

On the 31st of May we camped two miles and a half from one of the most remarkable curiosities of this savage region. It is a cone-shaped eminence of not far from a league in circumference, gashed by many ravines and standing upon a smooth plain. From the summit of this hill rises a square shaft, thirty to forty feet through by 150 in height; the form of this column has given it the name of the Chimney; it is 175 yards above the plain, and may be perceived from thirty miles away. The Chimney is composed of clay in a petrified state, interspersed with layers of white and grayish sandstone. It seems to be the remnant of a lofty mountain which the winds and the storms have been wearing down for ages; a few years more and this great natural curiosity will crumble away and make only a little heap on the plain; for when it is examined near at hand, an enormous crack appears in its top.[*] In the neighborhood of this wonder, all the hills present a singular aspect; some have the appearance of towers, castles and fortified cities. From a little distance, one can hardly persuade himself that art is not mingled in them with the fantasies of nature. Bands of the *ashata*, an animal called also *grosse-corne*, or bighorn, have their abode in the midst of these bad lands. The Chimney, with its castles and fantastic cities, forms the termination of a high ridge, which runs from south to north. We found a narrow passage through between two perpendicular cliffs 300 feet in height.

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[*] The Chimney, though still crumbling, remains a conspicuous object in 1903.

This region abounds in magnesia, insomuch that Glauber's salt is found almost everywhere, and in several places in great quantities in a crystallized state. Rattle-snakes and other dangerous reptiles, which are met with at every step, would be a scourge to the country, if the savages had not discovered, in a root that is very common in these parts, an infallible specific against all poisonous bites.[10]

Although we were still three days' journey from the Black Hills,[11] they were already distinctly visible. Everywhere we were in the midst of buffalo. If the earth is thankless and yields but little, Providence has provided in a different way for the subsistence of the Indians and travelers who traverse these regions. We killed without any trouble six buffalo a day for the forty persons who constituted our camp. In all my travels I have never wearied of watching with admiration these truly majestic animals, with their rugged necks, shoulders and heads. If their peaceable nature was not known, their aspect alone would terrify one. But they are timid and without malice, and never offer to do any harm, except in their own defense, when they are wounded and hard pressed. Their strength is extraordinary, and though they appear clumsy, they run notwithstanding with great speed; it takes a good horse to follow them very far.

In this same region, bands of wild or runaway horses are very numerous; much skill and a long-winded horse are required to catch them. The Spanish-Mexicans and, as a rule, the Indians, are expert in this kind of chase; it is seldom that they miss casting their lasso about an animal's neck, though at full speed.

On the 4th of June, we crossed the Fourche-à-la-Ramée,[12] [Laramie fork] one of the principal tributaries of the Platte, in a buffalo canoe, or bull-boat. Here we found some forty lodges of the Cheyennes, who received us with all the signs of good will and esteem; they were polite, cleanly and decent in their manners. The men in general are of great stature, straight and vigorous; they have aquiline noses and strongly marked chins. The history of this nation[18] is that of all the wild tribes of the prairies; they are the remnant of the powerful nation of the Shaways that once dwelt upon that Red river which flows into Lake Winnipeg. The Sioux, their irreconcilable enemies, forced them after a long war to cross the Missouri and take refuge on a little river called Warrikane, where they fortified themselves; but the conquerors again attacked them there, and drove them from post to post, to the midst of the Black Hills, upon the waters of the Big Cheyenne. In the course of these reverses, the tribe lost even its name; it is at present known only by that of the river which they frequent. They make no more efforts to establish a permanent abode, for fear of another attack from their cruel enemies. They have embraced the nomadic life, live by the chase and follow the buffalo in his migrations.

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[10] Probably the blackroot, spoken of on p. 663.

[11] This term, at present practically restricted to the Black Hills of South Dakota, was at first applied to all the secondary mountain systems of southeastern Wyoming.

[12] Laramie river takes its name from a trapper by the name of

The head chiefs of this village invited me to a feast, and put me through all the ceremonies of the calumet, as follows: first they give the Great Spirit to smoke, holding the pipe toward the heavens, then toward the sun, the earth and the water; then the calumet goes the rounds of the lodge three times; it passes from hand to hand, and every one takes half a dozen puffs. Then the chief embraced me and greeted me, saying, "Black-robe, my heart was very glad when I learned who you were. Never has

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Laramé, Joseph Laramée, as one writer gives it, who lost his life on the stream in 1821. The name was a frequent one among the voyageurs, and is often met with in the American Fur Company correspondence.

[18] From chapter XXIII of *Astoria*. The "Shaways" are not known to present-day ethnologists.

my lodge seen a greater day. As soon as I received the news of your coming, I had my big kettle filled to give you a feast in the midst of my warriors. Be welcome. I have had my three best dogs killed in your honor; they were very fat." Do not wonder when I tell you that this is their great feast, and that the flesh of the wild dog is very delicate and extremely good; it much resembles that of a young pig. The portion bestowed upon me was large; the two thighs and the paws, with five or six ribs; the law of the feast required me to eat it all, but it was too much for me. Finally I learned that one may get rid of his dish by passing it to another guest, with a present of tobacco.

I took the opportunity to speak to them of the principal points of religion; I explained to them the ten commandments of God and several articles of the creed. I made known to them the object of my journey to the mountains, asking whether they also did not desire to have Black-robes among them, to teach their children to know and serve the Great Spirit. The proposition seemed to please them greatly, and they answered that they would do what they could to render the stay of the Black-robes among them agreeable. I believe that a zealous missionary would meet with very good success among these savages. Their language is said to be very difficult; they are about 2,000 in number. The neighboring nations consider these Indians the most courageous warriors of the prairies.

Fort la Ramée [Laramie][14] is at the foot of the Black

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[14] Fort Laramie dates from 1834. In that year William L. Sublette built a fort at the mouth of the Laramie river and called it Fort William. Soon after it fell into the hands of the American Fur Company and was christened Fort John for John B. Sarpy. In 1846 it seems to have been abandoned and another built in its stead a mile farther up stream, and to this the name Fort Laramie was given. About 1849 the post was sold to the United States and the famous military post of Fort Laramie began its career.

Hills. There is nothing observable, either in the color of the soil of these mountains or in that of the rocks, that can have given them this name; they owe it to the sombre verdure of the little cedars and pines that shade their sides. The vegetable soil along the rivers and in the valleys is rather good; the uplands are very sterile and almost entirely covered with blocks of granite, quartz, marcasite[15] and other kinds of rock commingled, showing clearly that at some remote time there have been great subterranean convulsions in this region.

From la Ramée [Laramie] a range of the Rocky Mountains forty miles away is visible. It stands 5,000 feet above the plain. Every day the thermometer rose to 80° and 90° in the valleys of these mountains; while their summits were covered with snow. I was often deceived in regard to distances; sometimes I wished to examine more closely a big rock or an odd-looking hill; I started for it expecting to reach it in an hour; and it took me at least two or three hours. This must be due to the great purity of the atmosphere in the prairies of this high region.

Absinthe [artemisia; sage-brush] is a spontaneous product of this country; it grows to a height of eight to ten feet, and in so great abundance that it makes traveling in carts quite inconvenient. Wild cherries, gooseberries and service berries (an excellent little black fruit) are also very plentiful. The elder grows in ravines. Two kinds of cottonwood are common in the bottoms. On the banks of rivers and the slopes of mountains, groves of pines and cedars are seen.

On the 14th, [June, 1840] we camped at the foot of the Red Butte. This is a very lofty hill, of a red ochre color, composed of clay in a petrified state, and is a central point for the savages, who pass and repass it on their travels westward and northward. The northern branch of the Platte, which we had been following thus far, here takes a southerly direction; its source is 150 miles farther up. From the Red Butte we crossed over a high ridge to the Sweetwater,[16] or Rivière-de-l'Eau-douce, so called from the great purity of its waters. The most remarkable spot upon this river is the famous Independence Rock;[17] it is the first massive rock of that famous mountain chain which divides North America, and which travelers call the backbone of the universe. It is composed of granite *in situ* of a prodigious thickness, and covers several miles of ground; it is entirely exposed from top to bottom. It is the great register of the desert; the names of all the travelers who have passed by are there to be read, written in coarse characters; mine figures among them, as that of the first priest to reach this remote spot.

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[15] Native bisulphide of iron; prismatic iron pyrites.

For several days now we had on our right a chain of those naked rocks, so properly called Rocky Mountains. They are nothing but rocks heaped upon rocks; you think you have before your eyes the ruins of a whole world, covered with the eternal snows as with a shroud. On the 19th, we descried the Wind [or Wind River] Mountains, in which is the rendezvous of the caravan and its point of separation as well; but we were still nine days' journey from the place. Every day we became aware that it was growing colder and colder, and on the 24th [of June] we traversed plains covered with snow. On the day following we passed [South Pass] from the waters tributary to the Missouri to those of the Colorado, which flows into the Pacific Ocean by way of California, two degrees farther south than New Orleans. The pass across the mountains is almost imperceptible; it is five to twenty-five miles in width, and eighty in length. These mountains are calculated to be twenty to twenty-four thousand feet above the Atlantic Ocean.[18]

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[16] The name of this stream dates from the period of Ashley's expeditions. A fitting explanation of its origin might easily be given even in the absence of any historic data. The water in the adjacent country for many miles around is so impregnated with alkaline salts as to be unfit to drink. The thirsty traveler, coming suddenly upon this stream of pure mountain water, would very naturally by contrast call it the Sweetwater. But the French name, as first given, was not *Eau Douce*, but *Eau Sucré*, sugared water, and arose, according to Ferris, from the fact that in the very early years, certainly before 1830, a pack mule laden with sugar was lost in the stream.

[17] Independence Rock was a famous landmark. It is an immense oblong block of oval, but irregular shape, along the southern base of which lay the river and along the northern base the old Trail. It covers an area of over twenty-seven acres and its highest point is 155 feet above the level of the river. It is wholly isolated and looks as if it had been dropped there in the midst of the plain. The site of the rock became from the first a great camping place, and the custom early arose of inscribing on it the names of travelers who passed it. It was named before 1830 from the circumstance of a party of American trappers having celebrated the Fourth of July at its base.

The granite of the rock is not durable, and though a multitude of names appear upon it, few, if any, dating back more than twenty-five or thirty years are now legible (1903).

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[18] The Wind River range constitutes a massive and rugged system of mountains between Wind and Green rivers. It was a very noted range during all the period of Father De Smet's travels. Their altitude, however, is greatly overstated by Father De Smet who here follows Captain Bonneville. Fremont Peak, the highest of the range, is only 13,790 feet high.

CHAPTER II.

GREEN RIVER RENDEZVOUS TO THREE FORKS OF MISSOURI.

The rendezvous on Green river — First meeting with the Flatheads — Makes friends also with the Snakes — Their manners and customs — Four days' rest on Green river — Sets out with the Flatheads for their country — A veteran of Napoleon's — Jackson's Little Hole — Crossing Snake river in a bag — Pierre's Hole — The home camp — Amiable Indians — Religious labors — Gratifying results — Across the mountains into Montana — The plain of the Three Forks.

ON the 30th I came to the rendezvous,[1] where a band of Flatheads, who had been notified of my coming,[2] were already waiting for me. This happened, as I said further back, on Green river, a tributary of the Colorado; it is the place whither the beaver-hunters and the savages of different nations betake themselves every year to sell their peltries and procure such things as they need.

I will now give you a short account of the customs, characters and locations of the several mountain tribes, according to my own observations and the best information that I have been able to obtain.

The Shoshones, or Root-diggers, called also Snakes, were present at the rendezvous in great numbers. They inhabit the southern part of the territory of Oregon, in the vicinity of upper California. Their population of about 10,000 souls is divided into several bands, scattered here and there over the barrenest country in all the region west of the mountains; almost all the surface is covered with scoria and other volcanic products. They are called Snakes by reason of their poverty, which reduces them to burrow in the ground like those reptiles and to live upon roots. Occasionally a hunting-party will come east of the mountains to hunt buffalo, and at the season when the fish come up from the sea, they go down to the banks of Salmon river and its tributaries to lay in their winter stock. They are pretty well provided with horses. At the rendezvous they gave a parade to greet the whites that were there. Three hundred of their warriors came up in good order and at full gallop into the midst of our camp. They were hideously painted, armed with their clubs, and covered all over with feathers, pearls, wolves' tails, teeth and claws of animals, outlandish adornments, with which each one had decked himself out according to his fancy. Those who had wounds received in war, and those who had killed the enemies of their tribe, displayed their scars ostentatiously and waved the scalps they had taken on the ends of poles, after the manner of standards.

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[1] The rendezvous was one of the most interesting developments of the fur trade in the Rocky Mountains. It arose from the necessity of carrying the trade into regions remote from navigable rivers, where boats could not carry the annual merchandise nor bring back the furs. The transportation was done by annual caravans from the States, and rendezvous were appointed for each year at points convenient for the trappers and Indians to meet the traders. These meetings were great events and form one of the most picturesque features of early frontier life in the Far West.

[2] By Peter Left Hand, one of the two members of the fourth "Flathead embassy," who preceded him to announce his coming, while the other envoy, Young Ignace, remained to accompany Father De Smet.

After riding a few times around the camp, uttering at intervals shouts of joy, they dismounted and all came to shake hands with the whites in sign of friendship. I was invited to a council by some thirty of the principal chiefs. Just as among the Cheyennes, we had first to go through all the ceremonies of the calumet. To begin, the chief made a little circle on the ground, placed within it a small piece of burning dried cow-dung, and lit his pipe from it. Then he offered the pipe to the Great Spirit, to the sun, to the earth and the four cardinal points. All the others observed a most profound silence and sat motionless as statues. The calumet passed from hand to hand, and I noticed that each one had a different way of taking it.

One turned the calumet around before putting the stem to his mouth; the next made a half-circle as he accepted it; another held the bowl in the air; a fourth lowered it to the ground, and so on. I am naturally inclined to laughter, and I must confess that on this occasion I had to make serious efforts not to break out, as I watched the gravity observed by these poor savages in the midst of all these ridiculous affectations. These forms of smoking enter into their superstitious religious practices; each one has his own, from which he would never dare deviate all his life long, for fear of displeasing his Manitous.

I made known to them the motives of my visit, the commandment which God had given the Black-robes to go and preach his holy law to all the nations of the earth, the obligation that all peoples were under to follow it as soon as it was known to them, the everlasting happiness which it brings to all who follow it faithfully unto death, and hell with all its torments, which would be the lot of whomsoever should close his ears to the word of Jesus Christ. I laid before them the advantages which they would receive from a mission, and I ended by preaching to them the principal points of Christianity.

The savages paid the greatest attention, and appeared struck with wonder at the holy doctrine that I had been explaining to them. They then took counsel among themselves for the space of half an hour, when the spokesman, in the name of all the chiefs, addressed me in the following words: "Black-gown, your words have entered our hearts; they will never go out from them. We wish to know and practice the sublime law that you have just made known to us, in the name of the Great Spirit, whom we love. All our country is open to you, you need only choose to settle an establishment. We will all of us leave the plains and the forests, to come and put ourselves under your orders, about you." I advised them, while awaiting that happy day, to choose wise men in their several camps, to perform the prayers in common evening and morning;

since thereby the good chiefs would find occasion to incite all the people to virtue. That very evening they assembled, and the head chief promulgated a law, that whoever in future should steal or commit any other scandal should be punished in public.

The Snakes believe the especial residence of the Great Spirit to be in the sun, in fire and in the earth. When they make a solemn promise, they take the sun, the fire and the earth to witness their undertaking. When a chief or warrior of the nation dies, his wives, children and nearest relatives cut off their hair; that is their full mourning. They even clip the manes and tails of all the dead man's horses, giving the poor animals a most sorry appearance. Then they make a pile of all his possessions in the middle of the lodge, cut the poles that support it into little pieces and burn all his property at once. The corpse is tied upon his favorite horse, and led down to the edge of the neighboring river. There the warriors chase the animal, surround him closely and utter such horrible yells that they force him to leap into the current with his master's body. Then, yelling all the louder, they tell him to transport his master without delay to the land of souls. Nor is that all: to testify to their sorrow, they cut themselves in all the fleshy parts of their bodies; and the greater their attachment to the departed the deeper are the gashes. I have been assured that they claim that their sorrow escapes through these wounds. Would you believe that these same people, who feel the death of a relative so keenly, have, like the Sioux, the Pawnees and most nomadic tribes, the barbarous custom of abandoning the old and the sick pitilessly to the ferocious beasts of the desert, as soon as they begin to be in the way in their hunting expeditions?

While I was in their camp, the Snakes were making ready for an expedition against the Blackfeet. As soon as the chief had announced to all the young warriors his resolution to carry the war into the enemy's country, all who proposed to follow him prepared their rations, moccasins, bows and arrows. The evening before their departure, the chief, at the head of his soldiers, performed his farewell dance at every lodge; everywhere he received a piece of tobacco or some other present. If they take any women prisoners on these expeditions, they carry them to camp and hand them over to their wives, mothers and sisters. These women immediately butcher them with their hatchets and knives, vomiting upon the poor wretches, in their frantic rage, the most crushing and outrageous language. "Oh! Blackfoot bitches," they cry: "If we could only eat the hearts of all your young ones, and bathe in the blood of your cursed nation!"[3] * * *

Never in my life have I enjoyed so many consolations as during my stay among these good Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles; the Lord has amply compensated for all the privations and sufferings that I had endured in this long and laborious journey. I have spoken further back of having found a deputation from these two tribes at the rendezvous on Green river. Those good Indians had come to meet me to serve as an escort in this country, so dangerous to travel. Our meeting was not that of strangers, but of friends; it was like children running to meet their father after a long absence. I wept with joy at embracing them, and they also, with tears in their eyes, welcomed me with tenderest expressions. With a truly patriarchal simplicity, they told me all the little news of their nation, their almost miraculous preservation in a fight between sixty of their warriors and 200 Blackfeet, a fight that lasted five days, and in which they had killed fifty of their enemies without losing a single man. "We fought like brave men," they told me, "in the desire to see you; the Great Spirit took pity on us, he helped us to remove dangers from the path that is to lead you to our camp. The Blackfeet will not trouble us again for a while; they went away weeping. Our brothers are burning with impatience to see you." We thanked the Lord together for having preserved us thus far in the midst of so many dangers, and implored his protection in the long journey that we had yet to make.

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[3] For omitted portion of the letter, see p. 989.

I had stayed four days on Green river to allow my horses time to recover from their fatigue, to give good, wholesome advice to the Canadian hunters, who seem to be in great need of it, and to talk with the Indians of various nations. On the 4th[4] of July, I resumed my travels, with my Flatheads; ten brave Canadians also chose to accompany me. A good Fleming from Ghent, Jean-Baptiste de Velder, an old grenadier of Napoleon, who had left his fatherland thirty years ago, and had passed the last fourteen in the mountains in the capacity of beaver-hunter, generously offered to serve and aid me in all my journeyings. He was resolved, he told me, to pass the rest of his days in the practice of his holy religion. He had almost forgotten the Flemish language, except his prayers and a hymn in Flemish verses in honor of Mary, which he had learned as a child on his mother's knees, and which he recited every day.

Three days we ascended Green river, and on the 8th we crossed it, heading for an elevated plain which separates the waters of the Colorado from those of the Columbia. In this plain, as in all mountain valleys that I have traversed, flax grows in the greatest abundance; it is just the same as the flax that is cultivated in Belgium, except that it is an annual; the same stalk, calix, seed and blue flower, closing by day and opening in the evening. On leaving this plain, we descended several thousand feet by a trail and arrived in Jackson's Hole.[5] The slope of the surrounding mountains abounds in the rarest plants, and offers the amateur botanist a superb collection. The valley is seventeen miles long by five or six wide. Thence we passed into a narrow and extremely dangerous defile, which was at the same time picturesque and sublime. Mountains of almost perpendicular cliffs rise to the region of perpetual snow, and often overhang a rugged and narrow path, where every step threatens a fall. We followed it for seventeen miles, upon a mountain side inclined at an angle of 45° over a torrent which rushed uproariously in cascades, hundreds of feet below our route. The defile was so narrow, and the mountains on either hand so high, that the sun could scarcely penetrate it for an hour or two of the day. Pine forests like those of Norway, balsam firs, ordinary poplars, cedars, mulberry trees and many other varieties cover the sides of these mountains.

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[4] 6th in one of the English letters.

[5] This was not Jackson's Hole, but a much smaller valley near the head of Hoback river, called Jackson's Little Hole.

On the 10th, after crossing the lofty mountain, we arrived upon the banks of Henry's Fork, [Snake river] one of the principal tributaries of Snake [Columbia] river.[6] The mass of snow melted during the July heat had swollen this torrent to a prodigious height. Its roaring waters rushed furiously down and whitened with their foam the great blocks of granite which vainly disputed the passage with them. The sight intimidated neither our Indians nor our Canadians; accustomed to perils of this sort, they rushed into the torrent on horseback and swam it. I dared not venture to do likewise. To get me over, they made a kind of sack of my skin tent; then they put all my things in and set me on top of it. The three Flatheads who had jumped in to guide my frail bark by swimming, told me, laughing, not to be afraid, that I was on an excellent boat. And in fact this machine floated on the water like a majestic swan; and in less than ten minutes I found myself on the other bank, where we encamped for the night.

The next day we had another high mountain to climb through [Teton Pass] a thick pine forest, and at the top we found snow, which had fallen in the night to the depth

[6] Father De Smet is in error here and later on, page 228, in applying the name Henry to the main Snake river.

of two feet. This is a very remarkable thing in this region; when it rains in the valley in summer, snow falls in big flakes on the mountains. In descending into the great valley known as Pierre's Hole,[7] we found the trail very steep and slippery. The horses and mules of the mountains are very skilful in these kinds of dangerous passages; just let them alone and you are safe; a rider who should persist in guiding them in these circumstances would be at every step in danger of breaking his neck.

In the mountain valleys, the soil is generally nearly black, but sometimes yellow. It is often found mixed with marl and marine substances in a decomposed state. This kind of soil extends to a great depth, as may be seen in the vast cuttings of the ravines and upon the banks of rivers. The vegetation in these valleys is very abundant. It is a land where the geologist beholds evidences of the extensive action of volcanic forces, and much also that is of interest in the various formations of lava, etc.

One day's travel in the great valley of Pierre's Hole brought us to the camp of the Flatheads and the Pend d'Oreilles. The poles were already up for my lodge, and at my approach men, women and children came all together to meet me and shake hands and bid me welcome; the number of them was about 1,600. The elders wept with joy, while the young men expressed their satisfaction by leaps and shouts of happiness. These good savages led me to the lodge of the old chief, called in his language Big Face. He had a truly patriarchal aspect, and received me in the midst of his whole council with the liveliest cordiality. Then he addressed me the following remarks, which I report to you word for word, to give you an idea of his eloquence and his character: "Black-robe, you are welcome in my nation. Today Kyleêeyou[8] (the Great Spirit) has fulfilled our wishes. Our hearts are big, for our great desire is gratified. You are in the midst of a poor and rude people, plunged in the darkness of ignorance. I have always exhorted my children to love Kyleêeyou. We know that everything belongs to him, and that our whole dependence is upon his liberal hand. From time to time good white men have given us good advice, and we have followed it; and in the eagerness of our hearts, to be taught everything that concerns our salvation, we have several times sent our people to the great Black-robe at St. Louis (the bishop) that he might send us a Father to speak with us.—Black-robe, we will follow the words of your mouth."

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[7] Pierre's Hole is one of the most beautiful, and in early times was one of the most celebrated, valleys of the Rocky Mountains. The trappers always called the mountain valleys "holes." Pierre's Hole lies just west of the Teton Mountains and is about twenty-five miles long by five to fifteen broad. It was named from an Iroquois trapper who discovered it. It was a favorite resort for the traders, trappers and Indians and several rendezvous were held there. The famous battle of Pierre's Hole, between the Blackfeet Indians on one side and the trappers and Flathead Indians on the other, took place in 1832.

Then I had a long talk on religion with these honest folk; I explained to them the object and advantages of my mission, and the necessity of settling permanently in a fertile and suitable spot. All expressed the greatest satisfaction and showed much eagerness to exchange the bow and quiver for the spade and plow. I set a schedule of spiritual exercises for them, particularly for the morning and evening prayers in common, and for the hours of instruction. One of the chiefs at once brought me a bell to give the signals, and on the first evening I gathered all the people about my lodge. I made known to them my conversation with their chiefs, the plan which I meant to follow for their instruction, and the necessary frame of mind that the Great Spirit required of them to comprehend and practice the holy law of Jesus Christ, who alone could save them from the torments of hell, make them happy on earth and procure them after this life eternal happiness with God in heaven. After that I said the evening prayers, and finally they sang together, in a harmony which surprised me very much, and which I thought admirable for savages, several songs of their own composition, on the praise of God. It would be impossible to describe to you the emotions that I felt at this moment. How touching it is for a missionary to hear the benefactions of the Most High proclaimed by poor children of the forests, who have not yet had the happiness of receiving the light of the gospel!

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[8] Kaikolinzoeten (Our God) in the English version. The word in the text means Our Father.

Every morning, at daybreak, the old chief was the first to rise; then mounting a horse he rode up and down the camp to harangue his people. This is a custom that he has always observed, and I think it has kept these Indians in the great unity and admirable simplicity that are observed among them. These 1,600 persons, thanks to his fatherly care and good advice, seemed to form but a single family, in which order and charity reigned in a truly surprising manner. "Come, courage, my children," he cried, "open your eyes. Address your first thoughts and words to the Great Spirit. Tell him that you love him, and ask him to take pity on you. Courage, for the sun is about to appear, it is time you went to the river to wash yourselves. Be prompt at our Father's lodge, at the first sound of the bell; be quiet when you are there; open your ears to hear and your hearts to hold fast all the words that he says to you." Then he would administer fatherly rebukes for anything he and the other chiefs had observed that was out of order in their conduct the day before. At the voice of this old man, whom all love and respect like a tender father, they would hasten to arise; all would be in motion in the village, and in a few minutes the banks of the river would be covered with people.

When all were ready, I rang the bell for prayer, and from the first day to the last they continued to show the same avidity to hear God's word. Their eagerness was so great that they would run to get a good place; even the sick got themselves carried thither. What a lesson for the cowardly and pusillanimous Christians of the old Catholic countries, who have always plenty of time for coming to the divine services, and think they do enough if they are in time for the first gospel and get the benediction at the *Ite missa est;* or for those who make a pretext of the least sickness, or of a show of bad weather to excuse themselves from attending the holy mass and their pastors' sermons!

This zeal for prayer and instruction (and I preached to them regularly four times a day) instead of declining, increased up to the time of my departure. They told me often that it was their delight to hear the word of God. The day after my arrival among them, I had nothing more urgent to do than to translate the prayers into their language, with the aid of a good interpreter [Gabriel Prudhomme]. Fifteen days later, at instructions, I promised a medal to the first who should be able to recite without a mistake the *Pater,* the *Ave,* the *Credo,* the ten commandments of God and the four acts. A chief rose: "Father," he said, "your medal belongs to me." And to my great surprise, he recited all these prayers without missing a word; I embraced him and made him my catechist. The good savage put so much zeal and perseverance into his task that in less than ten days the whole nation knew their prayers.

During my stay among this good people, I have had the happiness of regenerating nearly 600 of them in the saving waters of baptism; all [the others] ardently desired to obtain the same favor; and their dispositions were without doubt excellent; but since the absence of missionaries could only be momentary, I thought it prudent to put them off until the following year, to give them a high idea of the dignity of the sacrament, and to try them in regard to the indissolubility of the bonds of marriage, which is an unknown thing among the Indian nations of America; for they often part for the most frivolous causes. Among the adults baptized were the two head chiefs of the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles, both octogenarians. Before bestowing the holy sacrament upon them, as I was urging them to renewed repentance for their sins, Walking Bear, the second of the two named, answered me: "When I was young, and even as I became old, I was plunged in profound ignorance of good and evil, and in that period I must no doubt have displeased the Great Spirit; I sincerely implore pardon of him. But every time I have perceived that a thing was bad, I have at once banished it from my heart. I do not remember ever in my life to have deliberately offended the Great Spirit." Are there in our Europe many Christians who could give this testimony of themselves?

I was not able to discover among these people the slightest blameworthy act, unless it was their gambling, in which they often venture everything they possess. These games were unanimously abolished, as soon as I had explained to them that they were contrary to the commandment of God, saying: "Ye shall not covet anything that is your neighbor's." They are scrupulously honest in their buying and selling; they have never been accused of having committed a theft; everything that is found is taken to the lodge of the chief, who cries the articles and returns them to the owner. Slander is unknown even among the women; lying is hateful to them beyond anything else. They fear, they say, to offend God, and that is why they have only one heart, and they abhor a "forked tongue;" a liar. Quarrels and fits of rage are severely punished. No one suffers without his brothers interesting themselves in his trouble and coming to his succor; accordingly, they have no orphans among them. They are polite, always of a jovial humor, very hospitable, and helpful to one another in their duties. Their lodges are always open to any one; they do not so much as know the use of keys and locks. One single man, by the influence which he has justly acquired by his bravery in fight and his wisdom in the council, leads the whole tribe; he has no need of guards, nor bolts, nor iron bars, nor state prisons. I have often asked myself: "Is it these people whom the civilized nations dare to call by the name of savages?" Wherever I have met Indians in those remote regions, I have found them very teachable in everything adapted to better their condition. The vivacity of their young people is surprising, and the amiability of their characters and their dispositions among themselves are remarkable. People have too long been accustomed to judge the savages of the interior by those of the frontier; these last have learned the vices of the whites, who, guided by the insatiable thirst for sordid gain, endeavor to corrupt them and encourage them by their example.

I found the camp of the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles in the valley called Pierre's Hole. This valley is situated at the foot of the three Tetons,[9] sharp-peaked mountains of a prodigious height, rising almost perpendicularly more than 10,000 feet, and covered with perpetual snow. There are five of them, but only three can be seen at any great distance. Thence we ascended one of the principal forks of Henry's [Fork of Snake] river,[10] making every day little camps nine or ten miles apart. Often, in these little stages, we passed and repassed high hills, wide and swift torrents, narrow and dangerous defiles. Often also we came upon lovely valleys, level and open, rich in pasture grounds of a beautiful verdure, dotted with flowers, and where the mountain balsam (the travelers' tea) abounds. This tea, even after it has been crushed beneath the feet of thousands of horses, still perfumes the air with its delicious scent. In the valleys and defiles which we traversed, several more mountains drew our attention; some were in the form of cones, rising to a height of several thousand feet at an angle of forty-five to fifty degrees, very smooth and covered with a fair verdure; others represented domes; others were red as well-burned brick, and still bore the imprints of some great convulsion of nature; there were scoria and lava so porous that they floated on water; they were found scattered in all directions, and so abundantly in some places that they seemed to have filled whole valleys. In several places the openings of ancient craters were still to be distinguished. The argillaceous and volcanic strata of the mountains are generally horizontal; but in several places they hang perpendicularly, or else they are curved or wavy; often one might take them for artificial works.

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[9] The Teton Mountains are the most interesting, historically and otherwise, in the United States. The principal summit, the Grand Teton, is 13,691 feet high. Jackson Hole (named for the fur trader, David Jackson), is a very celebrated valley at the eastern base of the range.

[10] Named for Andrew Henry, a fur trader, who built a fort in its valley in the fall of 1810.

On the 22d of July the camp came to Henry's lake, one of the principal sources of the Columbia; it is about ten miles in circumference. We climbed on horseback the mountain that parts the waters of two great rivers; the Missouri, which is properly speaking the main branch of the Mississippi and flows with it into the Gulf of Mexico, and the Columbia, which bears the tribute of its waters to the Pacific Ocean. From the elevated spot at which I was I could easily distinguish Mosquito lake,[11] source of one of the main branches of the north fork of the Missouri, called Jefferson River.

The two lakes are scarce eight miles apart. I started for the summit of a high mountain, for a better examination of the fountains that give birth to these two great rivers; I saw them falling in cascades from an immense height, hurling themselves with uproar from rock to rock; even at their source they formed already two mighty torrents, scarcely more than a hundred paces apart. I was bound to get to the top. After six wearisome hours, I found myself exhausted; I think I must have climbed more than 5,000 feet; I had passed snow drifts more than twenty feet deep, and still the mountain top was at a great height above me. I therefore saw myself compelled to give up my plan, and I found a place to sit down. The fathers of the Company who are in the missionary service on the banks of the Mississippi and its tributaries, from Council Bluffs to the Gulf of Mexico, came to my mind. I wept with joy at the happy memories that were aroused in my heart. I thanked the Lord that he had deigned to favor the labors of his servants, scattered over this vast vineyard, imploring at the same time his divine grace for all the nations of Oregon, and in particular for the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles, who had so recently and so heartily ranged themselves under the banner of Jesus Christ. I engraved upon a soft stone this inscription in large letters: *Sanctus Ignatius Patronus Montium. Die Julii* 23, 1840.

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[11] Le lac des Maringouins; Red Rock lake. This lake is the most distant from the sea, by river channel, of any lake upon the globe. It is the ultimate source of the Missouri.

I said a mass of thanksgiving at the foot of this mountain, surrounded by my savages, who intoned chants to the praise of God, and installed myself in the land in the name of our holy founder. Let us implore his aid, that through his intercession in heaven, this immense desert, which offers such great hopes, may speedily be filled with worthy and unwearying laborers. To-day is the accepted time to preach the gospel to these different nations. The apostles of Protestantism are beginning to crowd in and pick out the best places, and soon the cupidity and avarice of civilized man will make the same inroads here as in the east, and the abominable influence of the vices of the frontier will interpose the same barrier to the introduction of the gospel, which all the savages seem to have a great desire to know, and which they will follow with fidelity, like the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles.

During all my stay in the mountains, I said the holy mass regularly Sundays and feast-days, as well as on days when the Indians did not break camp in the morning; the altar was made of willows; my blanket made an altar cloth, and all the lodge was adorned with images and wild flowers; the Indians knelt without in a circle of about 200 feet, surrounded by little pines and cedars, set out expressly; they took assiduous part with the greatest modesty, attention and devotion, and since various nations were among them, they chanted the praises of God in the Flathead, Nez Percé and Iroquois languages. The Canadians, my Fleming and I sang chants in French, English and Latin. The Flatheads had already had for some years a custom of never breaking camp on Sunday, but of passing that day in devotional exercises.

On the 24th of July, the camp crossed the mountain and moved from Henry's lake to Mosquito [Red Rock] lake. Until the 8th of August, we were still traveling through a great variety of country. Now we would find ourselves in open, smiling valleys, now in sterile lands beyond lofty mountains and narrow defiles, sometimes in extensive high plains, profusely covered with blocks and fragments of granite.

On the 10th we camped on Jefferson river. The bottom is rich in lovely pasture lands and wooded with trees of thin growth. We went down it, making twelve to fifteen miles a day, and on the 21st of the same month we came to the junction of the three forks of the Missouri, where that river first takes this name; we camped on the middle branch [Madison Fork]. In this great and beautiful plain were buffalo in numberless herds. From Green river to this place, our Indians had made their food of roots and the flesh of such animals as the red and black-tailed deer, elk, gazelle, bighorn or mountain sheep, grizzly and black bear, badger, rabbit and panther, killing also occasionally such feathered game as grouse, prairie-hens (a kind of pheasant), swans, geese, cranes and ducks. Fish abounded besides in the rivers, particularly salmon trout. But cow-meat is the favorite dish of all the hunters, and as long as they can find it, they never kill any other animals. Finding themselves therefore in the midst of abundance, the Flatheads prepared to lay in their winter supply; they raised willow scaffolds about their lodges for drying meat, and every one made ready his fire-arm, his bow and his arrows. Four hundred horsemen, old and young, mounted on their best horses, started early in the morning for their great hunt. I chose to accompany them in order to watch this striking spectacle from near at hand. At a given signal, they rode at full gallop among the herds; soon everything appeared confusion and flight all over the plain; the hunters pursued the fattest cows, discharged their guns and let fly their arrows, and in three hours they killed more than 500. Then the women, the old men and the children came up, and with the aid of horses carried off the hides and the meat, and soon all the scaffolds were full and gave the camp the aspect of a vast butcher-shop. The buffalo are hard to kill; they must be wounded in the vital parts. A ball that strikes a bull's forehead produces no other effect than a movement of the head and a greater exasperation; on the other hand, one that strikes the forehead of a cow penetrates. Several bulls, mortally wounded in this hunt, defended themselves furiously.[12]

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[12] For omitted portion of this letter, see p. 1001.

CHAPTER III.

RETURN FROM THREE FORKS TO ST. LOUIS.

Affecting departure from the Flatheads — Across Bozeman Pass to the Yellowstone — Danger from prowling Indians — Meets a camp of the Crows — Two days' observations of that tribe — More Crows on the Big Horn — Their poor prospects in the next world — Flathead escort returns from first trading post — Alone with the grenadier in the desert — Fort Union — Mandan village — Geological curiosities — An account of the Aricaras — Medicine feats — Encounters with the Sioux — Their friendliness — Ten days in a canoe among floating ice — Council Bluffs, Westport and St. Louis.

THE 27th of August [1840] was the day I had set for my departure. Seventeen warriors, selected braves of the two nations, stood early in the morning at the entrance to my lodge with three chiefs. The council of the elders had deputed them to serve as my escort for so long as I should find myself in the country of the Blackfeet and Crows, two nations so hostile to the whites,[1] that the first give them no quarter when they meet them, but massacre them in the cruelest manner; the second take from them everything they have, strip them to the shirt and leave them in the desert to perish of hunger and misery; sometimes they grant them life but make them prisoners. Long before sunrise all the nation was assembled around my lodge; no one spoke, but grief was painted on each face. The only thing I could say that seemed to console them was a formal promise of a prompt return in the following spring, and of a reinforcement of several missionaries. I performed the morning prayers amid the weeping and sobs of those good savages. They drew from me despite myself the tears that I would gladly have stifled for the moment. I made them see the necessity for my voyage; I urged them to continue serving the Great Spirit with fervor and to put from them every cause of scandal; I recalled to them the principal truths of our holy religion. After this I gave them for their spiritual head a very intelligent Indian, whom I had taken pains to instruct myself in a most particular manner; he was to represent me in my absence, call them together evening and morning, as well as Sundays, say the prayers to them, exhort them to virtue, and anoint the dying, and, in case of need, little children. There was but a single voice, a unanimous assent to all my recommendations. With tears in their eyes they all wished me a fortunate journey. Old Big-Face rose and said: "Black-robe, may the Great Spirit accompany you in your long and dangerous journey. We will offer vows evening and morning that you may arrive safe among your brothers at St. Louis. We will continue to offer vows until you return to your children of the mountains. When the snows disappear from the valleys, after the winter, when the grass begins to be green again, our hearts, so sad at present, will begin to rejoice. As the grass grows higher, our joy will become greater; but when the flowers appear, we will set out to come and meet you. Farewell."

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[1] This is true of the Blackfeet but not of the Crows, who were always friendly to the whites, except that they never hesitated to rob them of horses.

Full of trust in the Lord who had preserved me thus far, I started with my little band and my faithful Fleming, who chose to continue sharing my dangers and my labors. For two days we were going up the Gallatin, the southern [eastern] fork of the Missouri; thence we crossed by a narrow pass[3] thirty miles in length to the Yellowstone river, the second of the great tributaries of the Missouri. Here it was needful to take the greatest precautions; this is why we formed only a little band. We had to cross plains that stretched out of sight, sterile and arid lands, cut up with deep ravines, where at every step one might come upon enemies lying in wait. Scouts were sent out in every direction to reconnoiter the country; all traces, whether of men or of animals, were attentively examined. It is here that one cannot but admire the sagacity of the savage; he will tell you what day an Indian has passed by the spot where he sees his tracks, he will calculate the number of men and of horses, he will make out whether it was a war or hunting party; he will even recognize, from the impression of their footgear, to what nation they belonged. Every evening we chose a favorable place to pitch our camp, and built in haste a little fort with trunks of dead trees, to shelter us from a sudden attack.

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[3] Father De Smet crossed Bozeman Pass, the immemorial route of of travel between the Gallatin fork of the Missouri and the Yellowstone river, at the point where the latter stream turns sharply east from its long northerly course. The Northern Pacific railroad crosses the divide by means of a tunnel 3,600 feet long near the pass.

This region is the range of the grizzly bear, the most terrible animal of this desert; at every step we came upon their terrifying tracks. One of our hunters killed one and brought him to camp; his paws were thirteen inches in length, and each claw seven. The strength of this animal is surprising; an Indian has assured me that with a single blow of his paw he has seen one of these bears tear away four ribs from a buffalo, which fell dead at his feet. Another of my company was passing on the run near a dense willow thicket (the retreat of the bears when they have their young) when a she-bear rushed furiously upon his horse, put her formidable paw upon his croup, and rending the flesh to the bone overturned him with his rider. Luckily for my man, he gained his feet in a flash, gun in hand, and had the satisfaction of seeing his terrible adversary retreat into the willows as hastily as she had come forth. It is, however, rare for a bear to attack a man, unless the latter comes suddenly upon him or wounds him. If he is allowed to pass without harm, he retires, showing that the fear of man is upon him, as upon all the other animals.

For several days our route lay through the Yellowstone bottoms. Buffalo were scarce, for war-parties had traversed the same plains a few days previously. All the country along this river is very gravelly and full of round and oblong boulders, shaped by the water; here and there little patches of woods were seen in the distance on the banks of rivers.

Below the mouth of Clark's Fork the Yellowstone is hemmed in by high cliffs. We climbed them by a narrow trail to gain the uplands, or rather a chain of rough hills, which we were six days crossing. In this march we suffered much from thirst. We found all the springs exhausted and the beds of the streams dry. The whole region was covered with loose fragments of volcanic rocks; scarcely a trace of vegetation could be observed. Little elevations and banks of sand appeared at intervals, lightly covered with red cedars of a slim growth; but as a rule we saw no other vegetation than a small and stunted weed, *pommes de raquette* (a kind of thorny cactus) and some varieties of plants, which, like the cactus, grow best in the driest and most ungrateful soil. Fragments from the high hills and rocks, angular slabs of sandstone, were everywhere heaped upon the ground as ice-cakes are found heaped up on the sand-bars and banks of rivers; often they rose in lone pyramids or resembled obelisks of different forms.

As we went on, we perceived frequent tracks of horses. On the 5th of September we came to a place where numerous troop of horsemen had passed an hour before. Were they allies or enemies? Right here I will remark that in these solitudes, though the howling of wolves, the hissing of venomous serpents and the roaring of the tiger and grizzly bear are capable of freezing one with terror, this fear is nothing in comparison with that which fresh tracks of men and horses can arouse in the soul of the traveler, or the columns of smoke that he sees rising round about him. In an instant the escort came together to deliberate; every one examined his fire-arm, whetted his knife and the points of his arrows and made all preparations for a resistance to the death; for to surrender in such an encounter would be to expose one's self to perish in the most frightful torments. We resolved to follow the trail, determined to know who were ahead of us; it led us to a heap of stones piled up on a little eminence. Here more signs were manifest; these stones were colored with freshly shed blood; my savages surrounding them, examined them with serious attention. The head chief, a man with much sense, presently said to me, "Father, I think I can explain to you what we see before us. The Crows are not far away; we shall see them in two hours. If I am not mistaken, we are upon one of their battlefields; their nation will have met with some great loss here. This heap of stones has been raised to the memory of the warriors who have fallen under the blows of their enemies. Here the mothers, wives, sisters, daughters of the dead (you see their traces) have come to weep over their graves. It is their custom to tear their faces, cut their arms and legs and shed their blood upon these stones, rending the air at the same time with their cries and lamentations."

He was not mistaken; presently we perceived a considerable troop of savages some three miles off. They were in fact Crows returning to their camp, after having paid the tribute of blood to forty of their warriors, massacred two years before by the Blackfeet. Since they are just at present allies of the Flatheads, they received us with the greatest transports of joy. Soon we met groups of women covered with dried blood, and so disfigured that they aroused at once compassion and horror. They repeat this scene of mourning for several years, whenever they pass near the tombs of their relations and so long as the slightest spot of blood remains on their bodies they may not wash themselves.

The Crow chiefs received us with cordiality and gave us a great feast. The conversation was really pleasing; the languages of the two nations being different, it was carried on by signs. All the tribes of this part of America know the system and understand one another perfectly. Presently the Crows desired to buy the Flathead's handsome horses.

This is how a bargain was concluded before my eyes. A young Crow chief, of gigantic stature and covered with his gayest raiment, advanced to the midst of the gathering, leading his horse by the bridle, and placed it in front of the Flathead, as if to offer it in exchange for his. The latter giving no sign of approval, the Crow then laid at his feet his gun, then his scarlet robe, then all his ornaments one after another, then his leggings too, and finally his moccasins. Then the Flathead took the horse by the bridle, picked up the goods, and the bargain was concluded without a word being said. The Crow chief, though despoiled of all his fine clothes and plumage, leaped with joy upon his new courser and ran him around the camp several times, uttering yells of triumph and trying the horse at all his gaits.

The main wealth of the western Indians consists of horses; every chief and warrior owns a great number of them, which may be seen grazing in herds about their camps. They are objects of trade for them in time of peace and of booty in war, so that they often pass from one tribe to another at a very great distance. The horses that the Crows have are principally from the wild races of the prairies; but they had stolen some from the Sioux, the Cheyennes and other tribes of the southwest, who in turn had got them from the Spanish in their raids into the Mexican territory. The Crows are considered the most indefatigable marauders of the plains; they cross and recross the mountains in every direction, carrying to one side what they have stolen on the other. This is how they get the name of *Absaroka,* which signifies "Crow."[8] From their childhood they are practiced in this kind of larceny; they acquire an astonishing ability in it; their glory increases with the number of their captures, so that an accomplished robber is in their eyes a hero. Their country seems to stretch from the Black Hills [of Dakota] to the Rocky Mountains, embracing the Wind River Mountains and all the plains and valleys watered by that stream, as well as by the Yellowstone and Powder rivers and the upper waters of several branches of the Platte. The soil and climate of this country are very diverse; there are vast plains of sand and clay; there are springs of hot water and mines of coal; game is very abundant throughout. These are the best-formed savages I have met on my travels.

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[8] Sparrow-hawk, not crow.

I rode with this tribe for two days; they had plenty of everything, and according to their custom were passing the time in feasts and rejoicings. Since I hide nothing from you, I hope you will not be scandalized at learning that in a single afternoon I took part in twenty different banquets; hardly was I seated in one lodge, when somebody would come and call me to another. But as my stomach was not as accommodating as those of the Indians, I satisfied myself with tasting their messes, and for a little piece of tobacco the *eaters*, whom I had had the foresight to take with me, emptied the dishes carefully in my stead.

From this camp we made our way to the Big Horn, the largest tributary of the Yellowstone; it is a fair broad river, whose waters are pure as crystal. It traverses very extensive plains, well wooded on both banks, and offering beautiful grazing grounds. There we found another camp of Crows, to the number of about 1,000 souls. They too received us with the greatest demonstration of friendship, and again it was necessary to pass the day in going from one feast to another. I took a favorable occasion to speak to them upon various points of religion. As I was vividly depicting to them the torments of hell, and telling them how the Great Spirit had prepared it for those who evade his laws, one of the chiefs uttered an exclamation which I could not think of translating to you and said: "I think there are only two in all the Crow nation who will not go to that hell you speak of; those are the Otter and the Weasel; they are the only ones I know who have never killed, nor stolen, nor been guilty of the excesses which your law forbids. Still I may be mistaken about them, and in that case we will all go to hell in company." The next day I set out; one of the head chiefs made me a present of a handsome bell and hung it on my horse's neck. He invited me to make the tour of the camp with him; I followed him, my animal sounding his bell, and afterwards he accompanied me, out of civility, to the distance of six miles from his village.[4]

After having spent several more days in surmounting the difficulties of the passage, across sterile and broken hills, we came at last to the Fur Company's first fort.[5] It is called the Fort of the Crows. The Americans who reside there received us with a great deal of benevolence and friendliness, and I quickly recovered from my fatigue. Not until then did the intermittent fever entirely leave me. At this place the Flatheads edified all hands by their piety. In the fort as well as in the camp, and when we were on the road, we never failed to assemble morning and evening to say the prayers in common, and to sing some canticles to the praise of God. I had set my departure from the fort for the 13th of September. Here I decided to part from my faithful Flatheads. I told them that the country I was about to enter was yet more dangerous than that which we had just traveled together, since it was ranged incessantly by war-parties of the Blackfeet, Assiniboins, Grosventres, Aricaras and Sioux, nations which had always been hostile to them; that I durst not expose their lives further; that I entrusted my own preservation to Providence, and that aided by that divine protection I had nothing to fear. I exhorted them at the same time to continue to serve the Great Spirit with fervor; and reiterating my promises of a prompt return, accompanied by other missionaries, I embraced them all and wished them a fortunate journey.

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[4] Father De Smet found himself again among the Crows upon his return journey to St. Louis in the fall of 1842. He was equally well received by them, but as on the present occasion, no conversions nor baptisms resulted. Father Palladino records that Father Point baptized twelve children, believed to have been Crows, among the Grosventres in the winter of 1846–47 (see page 955), and Father De Smet baptized a number in 1863, as related hereafter. No other missionary work seems to have been done among them by Catholic priests until the year 1880.

[5] There were four "Crow posts" built by the American Fur Company in this vicinity.—Fort Cass, at the mouth of the Big Horn, built in 1832; Fort Van Buren, on the right bank of the Yellowstone near the mouth of Tongue river, in 1835; Fort Alexander on the left bank of the Yellowstone opposite the mouth of the Rosebud, about 1839; and Fort Sarpy on the right bank of the Yellowstone about twenty-five miles below the mouth of the Big Horn, in 1850. These posts were built for the trade of the Crow Indians.

My Fleming and I set out with courage upon the solitary and dangerous trip of several hundred miles that we had to make together across an unknown desert, in which there was no trail, nor any other guide than the compass. For a long time we followed the course of the Yellowstone [left bank], except in some places where chains of rocks intercepted our march and obliged us to make long circuits, crossing rough hills four or five hundred feet high. At every step we were aware of the forts that war-parties put up for their times of raid, murder and pillage; they might contain lurking enemies at the moment we passed them. Such a solitude, with all its horrors and dangers, has notwithstanding one very real advantage; it is a place where one is constantly looking Death in the face, and where he presents himself incessantly to the imagination in the most hideous forms. There one feels in a very special manner that he is wholly in God's hands. It is then easy to offer him the sacrifice of a life which belongs less to you than to the first savage who may see fit to take it; and to form the most generous resolutions a man is capable of. That was, in fact, the best "retreat" that I have ever made in my life. My only consolation was the object for which I had undertaken the journey; my guide, my support, my refuge, was the fatherly Providence of my God.

On the second day of the journey, I espied, upon waking very early in the morning, the smoke of a great fire a quarter of a mile away; only a rocky point separated us from a savage war-party. Without losing time, we saddled our horses and started at full gallop; at last we gained the hill, and crossing the ravines and the dry bed of a torrent, we reached the top without being perceived. That day we made forty to fifty miles without a halt, and did not camp until two hours after sunset, for fear of the savages coming upon our trail and following us. The same fear prevented our lighting a fire, and so we had to do without supper. I rolled myself in my blanket and stretched myself on the sod, commending myself to the good God. My grenadier, braver than I, was soon snoring like a steam engine in full swing; running through all the notes of the chromatic scale, he closed each movement of his prelude with a deep sigh, by way of modulation. As for me, I turned and rolled, but spent a sleepless night; what they call a *nuit blanche*. At dawn next morning we were already under way; we had to use the greatest precautions, because the country we had to traverse was most dangerous. Towards noon, a fresh cause for alarm; a buffalo had been killed, not more than two hours before, in a spot by which we had to pass; his tongue, marrowbones and some other delicate morsels had been taken. We trembled at this sight, thinking the enemy was not far away; but we ought rather to have thanked the Lord, who had thus prepared food for our evening meal. We turned in the opposite direction to the tracks of the savages, and that night we camped among rocks that are the resort of bears and tigers. There I had a good sleep. This time the music of my companion's snoring did not trouble me.

We always took the road early in the morning; but it was to confront fresh dangers each time, to meet here and there recent foot-prints of men and horses. Towards ten o'clock we came to an abandoned camp of forty lodges; the fires were not yet out; but luckily we saw no one. At last we came to the Missouri, but at a place where 100 lodges of Assiniboins had crossed an hour before. This is only a feeble outline of my dangerous transit from the Fort of the Crows to Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone.

I related these particulars one day to an Indian chief, who at once answered: "The Great Spirit has his manitous (guardian spirits); he sent them out to you on your way, to stupefy and put to flight the enemies who might have harmed you." A Christian could not better have recalled the fine text of the Psalms: *"Angelis suis mandavit de te, ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis."* I have never seen a plainer instance of the special Providence that protects the poor missionary.

The Yellowstone country abounds in game; I do not believe that there is in all America a region better adapted to the chase. I was for seven days among innumerable herds of buffalo. Every moment I perceived bands of majestic elk leaping through this animated solitude, while clouds of antelopes took flight before us with the swiftness of arrows. The ashata or bighorn alone seemed not to be disturbed by our presence; these animals rested in flocks or frolicked upon the projecting crags, out of gunshot. Deer are abundant, especially the black-tailed deer, which is hardly found elsewhere than in mountainous country. It is a noble and beautiful animal, covered with a dark brown *pelisse;* you will see him jump with all four feet at once, and his movements are so quick that he hardly seems to touch the ground. All the rivers and streams that we crossed in our course, gave evident signs that the industrious beaver, the otter and the muskrat were still in peaceable possession of their solitary waters. There was no lack of ducks, geese and swans. This country abounds in coal and in iron-mines. The Yellowstone appeared to me to be full of currents; it is not navigable, unless in the middle of summer, when the water from the melting snows rushes down in torrents from the mountains.

Fort Union[6] is the vastest and finest of the forts that the Fur Company has upon the Missouri; it is situated 2,200 [1,765] miles from St. Louis. The gentlemen residing there overwhelmed us with civilities; they could not get over their astonishment at the dangerous journey which we had just concluded so fortunately. During our stay among them, they supplied all our wants most liberally, and at our departure for the village of the Mandans they loaded us with all sorts of provisions. I shall be most thankful to them all my life.

After having regenerated sundry half-breed children in the holy waters of baptism, I left the fort on the 23d of September. It took us ten days to reach the village of the Mandans. The soil along the great river is much more fertile than that of the Yellowstone; but it is still the same vast prairie, diversified with high hills, or rather mountains, guttered with ravines. The river beds are dry through part of the year; but they are swollen to a prodigious height in the rainy season. On the hillsides and in the bottoms, on the banks of the rivers, handsome groves are found here and there; but the general aspect of the region is nothing but an undulating plain, covered with sod and various plants. The soil is strongly impregnated with sulphur, copperas, alum and Glauber's salts; the strata of earth give a strong color to the rivers that traverse them, and together with the crumbling of the banks of the Missouri, impart to the water of that immense stream the materials that render it muddy.

There are some sandy places in that region,[7] full of natural curiosities; I noticed great trunks of trees petrified, and the skeletons of various species of animals; among other things I found a big buffalo-skull, changed to stone as red as porphyry. I carried it a long way, but the trouble that this burden caused me, and the fatigue of the horses, who at that season of the year hardly found whereon to live, soon forced me to abandon it regretfully in the prairie, as I had been obliged to do before in the Black Hills and Rocky Mountains with all the other curiosities I had picked up.

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[6] Fort Union, the most important and the most celebrated of the American Fur Company posts on the upper Missouri, was founded in the fall of 1828, by the distinguished trader Kenneth McKenzie.

[7] This is the region which the distinguished geologist, Doctor F. V. Hayden, afterward made peculiarly his own. He made his first explorations here in 1854, and, confirming Father De Smet's belief, found matter for years of labor and many subsequent expeditions.

We met on our way a war-party of fifteen Assiniboins, returning from a fruitless expedition against the Grosventres of the Missouri. It is chiefly on such occasions as this that it is dangerous to meet the savages. To come home without horses, prisoners, scalps, is for them the climax of dishonor and shame; accordingly they showed us much displeasure, and their looks were nothing if not sinister. These Indians are, however, cowards, and this particular band were poorly armed. I was accompanied by three men from the fort, who were going to the Aricaras with a herd of horses, and though we were only five, each of us laid his hand upon his weapon, assuming an air of determination, and we had a little talk with them and continued our route without being molested. The next day we passed through a forest on the banks of the Missouri which had been in 1835 the winter quarters of the Grosventres, Aricaras and Mandans; it was there that these unfortunate nations had been attacked by that epidemic, which, in the course of a year, made such ravages among the Indian tribes; several thousand of the savages died of smallpox. We observed in passing that the corpses, wrapped in buffalo hides, had remained bound to the branches of the largest trees. This savage burial-ground offered a very sad and mournful sight, and gave my traveling companions occasion to relate several anecdotes as deplorable as they were tragic. Two days later we came to the miserable remnants of these three unfortunate tribes. The Mandans, who to-day scarce number ten families, have united with the Grosventres, who themselves had joined the Aricaras; altogether there are about 3,000 of them. Some of the young men having perceived us afar off, gave notice to the chiefs of the approach of strangers. At once they rushed out by hundreds to meet us; but the three men from Fort Union made themselves known, and presented me to their chiefs as a Black-robe of the Frenchmen. They received us with the greatest signs of friendliness and forced us to pass the afternoon and night in their camp. The kettles were soon filled in all the lodges, and the roasting pieces were set to the fire to celebrate our arrival. Here again, as among the Crows, it was a succession of invitations to feasts that we had to undergo until midnight. To refuse would have been the height of rudeness, and besides they believe us as capable as themselves of eating hugely and at any hour of the day or night. An Indian is a singular being in this respect; he is insatiable and indefatigable; he is always ready when eating is in question; but I must say also that he is of an admirable patience in time of dearth, and keeps the most rigorous fast for whole weeks.

These savages helped us next day to cross the Missouri in their bull-boats. These are shaped like a round basket, made of willows as thick as one's thumb interwoven and covered with a buffalo skin. The women manage these boats of their own manufacture with much skill. The weight and number of persons that they will carry is truly astonishing. Our horses, that had followed us swimming, became mired to the neck on the opposite bank; it took a half day's work to get them out of the mud.

The same evening we came to the first permanent village of the Aricaras. Their houses are very commodious and roomy; they are made with four great crotched tree-trunks set on end, supporting the beams and a roof of stout poles interwoven with osiers; the whole structure is covered with earth. A hole dug in the ground in the middle of the lodge serves for a fireplace, and an opening contrived in the top lets the smoke out and admits the light. Inside the lodge is surrounded with alcoves, resembling the bunks on a ship and concealed by skins in place of curtains. At the extremity of each lodge, or else upon the summit, you will see a kind of hunting or war trophy, consisting of two or more buffalo heads painted in an odd manner, and surmounted with shields, bows, quivers and other weapons.

[8]These Aricaras commonly wear no other garment than a loin-cloth. On feast days, they put on a handsome tunic, leggings and moccasins of gazelle-skin embroidered with porcupine quills of lively colors; then they envelope themselves in a buffalo robe loaded with ornaments and colors, throw their quiver filled with arrows over the left shoulder, and cover their head with a bonnet of eagle feathers. He who kills an enemy on his own ground is distinguished by tails of animals which he attaches to his legs. He who kills a grizzly bear wears the claws of that animal in the form of a collar, and it is the most glorious trophy of an Indian hunter. The warrior who returns from the enemy with one or several scalps, paints a red hand across his mouth, to show that he has drunk enemies' blood.

The warriors of the Aricaras and Grosventres, before starting on the warpath, keep a strict fast, or rather they abstain totally from drinking and eating for four days. In this interval their imagination is exalted to the point of delirium; whether it is the enfeebling of their organs or the natural effect of the warlike plans they are nursing, they claim to have strange visions. The elders and wise men of the tribe, being called in to interpret these dreams, draw from them auguries more or less favorable to the success of the enterprise; their explanations are received as oracles by which the expedition is to be regulated. While the preparatory fast continues, the warriors make incisions in their bodies, thrust pieces of wood into their flesh be-

[8] Much of this is from *Astoria*, chapter XXI.

neath the shoulder blade, tie leather straps to them and let themselves be hung from a post fastened horizontally upon the edge of a chasm 150 feet deep; often they even cut off one or two fingers, which they offer as a sacrifice to the Great Spirit, that he may grant them scalps in the warfare that they are about to undertake. In one of their last skirmishes with the Sioux, the Aricaras killed twenty of the enemy and placed their bodies in a heap in the middle of their village. Then began their grand war dance; many women and children took part. After having celebrated for a long time the exploits of their braves, they rushed like wild beasts upon the inanimate bodies, hacked them to pieces and stuck the scraps on the ends of long poles, with which they danced several times around the village.

One can form no idea of the cruelty of a great number of these savage tribes in the continual warfare that they wage with their neighbors. When they know that the warriors of a rival tribe have gone for a hunt, they come unexpectedly upon their village, massacre the children, women and old men, and carry away prisoners all the men they can lead. Sometimes they put themselves in ambush and let part of the band pass quietly, then all at once they give a hideous yell and shower upon the enemy a hail of bullets and arrows. A deadly combat begins instantly, they rush upon one another, war-club and ax in hand, and make a horrible butchery, boasting of their valor and spewing a torrent of insults upon the unhappy vanquished; death shows himself in a thousand hideous forms, the sight of which, though it would freeze with horror any civilized man, only inflames the rage of these barbarians. They insult and trample under foot the mutilated corpses; they tear off the scalps, roll in the blood like ferocious beasts, and often even devour the quivering members of those who still breathe. The conquerors return to their village dragging with them the prisoners destined to torment.

The women come to meet them, uttering frightful howls on the supposition that they will have to weep the death of their husbands or brothers. A herald calls out the circumstantial details of the expedition; the roll of the warriors is called, and their silence indicates that they have succumbed. Then the piercing cries of the women are renewed and their despair presents a scene of rage and grief that passes imagination. The last ceremony is the announcement of the victory; forgetting at once their own troubles, they [the women] hasten to celebrate the triumph of their nation; by an inexplicable transition, they pass in an instant from frantic sorrow to the most extravagant joy.

I could not find words to describe to you the torments that they [the men] inflict upon the poor prisoner devoted to death; one tears out his nails by the roots, another chews the flesh off his fingers, sticks the torn finger into his pipe and smokes its blood; they crush their toes between two stones, apply red-hot irons to all parts of their bodies, skin them alive and feed upon their quivering flesh. These cruelties continue for several hours, sometimes for a whole day, until the victim succumbs to so many fearful torments. The women, like veritable furies, often outdo the men in cruelty in these scenes of horrors. During all this horrible drama, the chiefs of the tribe are tranquilly seated about the stake where the victim is writhing; they smoke and look on at these tragic scenes without the slightest emotion. Often the prisoner dares to brave his executioners with a coolness truly stoical: "I do not fear death," he cries; "those who dread your torments are cowards, they are lower than women. May my enemies be confounded; they shall not draw a groan from me; let them rage and despair. Oh! if I could devour them and drink their blood in their own skulls to the last drop!"

At last we came to the big village of the Aricaras, which is only ten miles from that of the Mandans. The Fur

Company has a fort here also [Fort Clark].* I was surprised to find around the dwellings fair fields of maize, cultivated with the greatest care. These Indians continue to make the same earthen vessels (and every lodge has several of them) that are found in the ancient tombs scattered through the United States, and which the antiquarians of the country assume to have belonged to an earlier race than the savages of to-day. The jugglers or conjurers of the Aricaras enjoy a high reputation among the Indians, by reason of the astonishing tricks that they perform to give themselves greater importance; they pretend to have communications with the spirit of darkness. They plunge their arms to the elbows in boiling water, by means of the juice of a certain root wherewith they rub their arms. They eat fire and shoot arrows at one another without injury. One trick surprised me greatly, though the savage was unwilling to perform it in my presence, saying that my medicine (religion) was stronger than his.

He had his hands, feet, legs and arms bound with a thousand knots; he was then enclosed in a big net and afterwards in a buffalo robe. The man who tied him promised him a horse if he got rid of his bonds; but in a minute he came forth free from all his fetters, to the great surprise of all the spectators. The commandant of the fort offered him another horse if he would communicate his secret to him. "Let yourself be tied," said the sorcerer to him; "I have ten invisible spirits that are at my orders; I will detach three of my band and give them to you; they will untie you; but don't be afraid of them, for they will accompany you everywhere." The commandant was disconcerted by this statement of the savage and durst not accept the offer.

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* Fort Clark was built to accommodate the trade of the Mandans, Minnetarees and other tribes. It was located on the right bank of the Missouri fifty-five miles above the point where the Northern Pacific now crosses the river at Bismarck, N. D. This had been an important trading point from the earliest times. A post had been built there as early as 1822. Several other temporary posts were built in the vicinity but were succeeded by Fort Clark in 1831. This post was built by James Kipp under the orders of Kenneth McKenzie and was named after William Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

On the 6th of October I started on again for the fort of the Little Missouri,[10] or Fort Pierre. This is the company's great warehouse for goods destined for the wants of the savages inhabiting the river. As upon the Yellowstone, I was again without a guide in this ten days' journey. A Canadian who was going the same way accompanied us. One becomes by degrees accustomed to braving dangers. Full of confidence in the protection of God, we sought our way in a country where there is no trodden path, guided through these desert expanses like the mariner upon the vast ocean. The inhabitants of the fort had carefully recommended to us to avoid meeting the Yanktonnais, the Santees, the Hunkpapas, the Ogallalas, and the Blackfeet Sioux. Still we had to traverse the plains where they range. On the third day, a party of Yanktonnais and Santees, who were in hiding behind a butte, suddenly surprised us; but they were so far from meaning any harm that they loaded us with kindnesses, and after smoking the calumet of peace with us, furnished us provisions for the road. The next day we met several other parties who showed us the same friendliness and the same attentions; they shook hands with us and we smoked with them.

On the fifth [Eng. ninth] day we found ourselves in the neighborhood of the Blackfeet Sioux, a detached tribe of the Blackfeet of the mountains.[11] Their name alone and the race from which they descend terrified us; we therefore traveled as much as possible in the ravines, to conceal ourselves from the piercing eye of the savages who were roaming in the plains. Toward noon we stopped near a lovely spring to dine and take a moment's rest. As we were congratulating ourselves on not having yet met those redoubtable Blackfeet, all at once a fearful noise was heard on the hill that overlooked the spot where we had halted; a band of Blackfeet, who had been following our tracks in the ravines for several hours, came at us in a gallop. They were armed with guns, bows and arrows, almost naked, and painted in the most outlandish manner. I rose at once and presented my hand to him whom I believed to be the chief of the band; he said coldly, "Why are you hiding in this ravine?" I answered him that we were hungry and that the spring had invited us to take a moment's repose. He looked at me with wonder, and addressing the Canadian, who could speak the Sioux language a little better, said to him, "I have never seen such a man in my life. Who is he?" My long black robe and the missionary's cross that I bore upon my breast especially excited his curiosity. The Canadian answered him (and under the circumstances he was prodigal of his titles) "It is the man who talks to the Great Spirit. It is a chief or Black-gown of the Frenchmen." His fierce look at once changed; he ordered his warriors to put away their weapons and they all shook hands with me. I made them a present of a big twist of tobacco, and everybody sat down in a circle and smoked the pipe of peace and friendship. He then besought me to accompany him and to pass the night in his village, which was at no great distance. I followed him, and on coming in sight of the camp, which comprised some hundred lodges, or about 1,000 souls, I stopped a quarter of a mile away in a fair meadow on the bank of a fair river, and there pitched my camp. I had the head chief invited to sup with me. When I said the *Benedicite,* he asked the Canadian what I was doing. He answered that I was speaking to the Great

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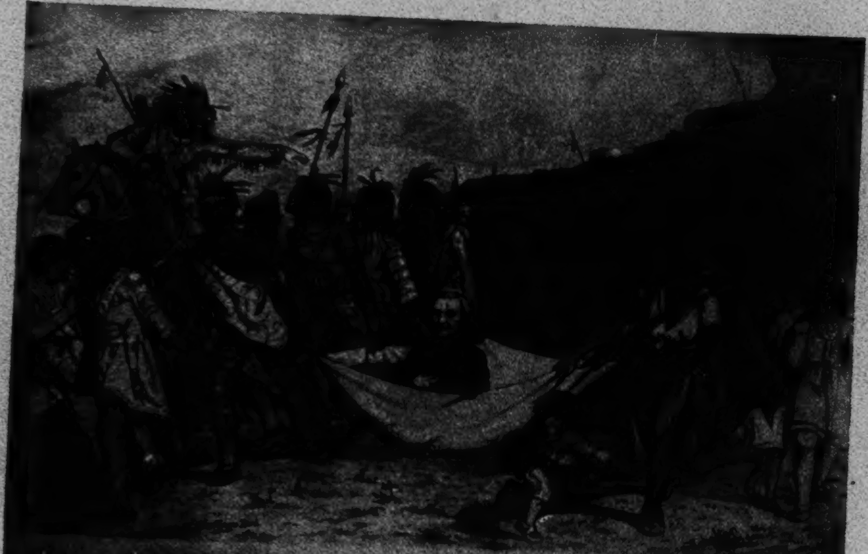
[10] This stream has been variously known as the Little Missouri, the Teton, and Bad river. It was formerly generally known by the second name, but now only by the third.

[11] Wrong. There is no relationship between the two tribes.



THE MISSIONER'S WELCOME.

Spirit to thank him for having procured us whereof to eat. He uttered an exclamation of approval.

Twelve warriors and their chief, in full costume, shortly afterward presented themselves before my lodge and spread a large and fine buffalo robe. The head chief took me by the arm and leading me to the skin made me a sign to be seated. I had no idea of the meaning of this ceremony, but I sat down, thinking that it was an invitation to smoke the calumet with them. Judge of my surprise when I beheld the twelve warriors seize this kind of carpet by the ends, lift me from the ground and, preceded by their chief, carry me in triumph to the village, where everybody was instantly afoot to see the Black-robe. The most honorable place in the chief's lodge was assigned to me, and he, surrounded by forty of his principal warriors, harangued me in these terms: "Black-robe, this is the happiest day of our lives. To-day for the first time we see among us a man who comes so near to the Great Spirit. Here are the principal braves of my tribe. I have bidden them to the feast that I have had prepared for you, that they may never lose the memory of so happy a day." Then he requested that I would speak again to the Great Spirit before commencing the feast; I made the sign of the cross and said the prayer. All the time it lasted, all the savage company, following their chief's example, held their hands raised toward heaven; the moment it was ended, they lowered their right hands to the ground. I asked the chief for an explanation of this ceremony. "We raise our hands," he replied, "because we are wholly dependent on the Great Spirit; it is his liberal hand that supplies all our wants. We strike the ground afterward, because we are miserable beings, worms crawling before his face." Then he took from my dish a piece of *pomme blanche* (a root that they use for food) and put it in my mouth with a little piece of buffalo meat.

I desired to speak to these honest folk of the main points of Christianity;[12] but the interpreter was not sufficiently skilled in the language to render my words into the Sioux. The next day, though we were still five days' journey from the fort, the chief had his son and two other young men go with me, praying me to instruct them. He desired absolutely, he said, to know the words I had to impart to them in behalf of the Great Spirit; and at the same time these young men would be a safeguard for me against evil-disposed savages.

Two days afterward we met an Indian loaded with cow's meat. Seeing that we were without provisions, he threw his load on the ground, begging that we would accept it; "For," he said, "you are going toward the fort, where game is very scarce." We reached Fort Pierre[13] on the 17th of October.

These are the names of the principal chiefs whom we met on our route: Iron Crow, Good Bear, Dog Hand, Black Eyes, Won't Eat Cow and Goes Barefoot. The last named is the chief of the Blackfeet. The principal

[12] It was Father De Smet's lifelong ambition to establish a mission among the Sioux. This ambition he never realized, although his influence over those tribes, the foundation of which was laid on the present journey, never lapsed, but on the contrary came to be the greatest ever wielded by any white man.

[13] Fort Pierre, next to Fort Union, the most important of the American Fur Company posts on the Missouri river, was built for the trade of the great tribe of the Sioux. It was located at an important bend in the stream where it turns east from its long southerly course after leaving Fort Clark. It was conveniently located for the trade of the whole Dakota country as far west as the Black Hills. Many posts have been built in its vicinity, where the Teton river empties into the Missouri. Fort Tecumseh, the predecessor of Pierre, was built in 1822 by the Columbia Fur Company, and passed to the American Fur Company when the latter bought out the Columbia Fur Company in 1827. Owing to the encroachments of the river which threatened the destruction of the fort, it was rebuilt in 1831, and christened Fort Pierre about June 1, 1832, in honor of Pierre Chouteau, the head of the company.

rivers we crossed on this stretch are the Heart, Cannonball, Grand, Moreau and Big Cheyenne rivers. [La rivière du Cœur, la rivière au Boulet, la rivière Grande, le Moreau et la grande Cheyenne.]

After spending several days at Fort Pierre, I set out again for Fort Vermillion, in company with two Canadians. The plains that we crossed were almost entirely bare of timber; often we were obliged to cook our meals with dry grass, which we had to keep in a constant flame. We met very few Indians in this journey of nineteen days; the plain was burnt up. We crossed the Medicine, Chapelle, James and Vermillion rivers. [La rivière de Médecine, la rivière de la Chapelle, la rivière à Jacques et le Vermillon.]

The Sioux nation is very numerous and warlike and is divided into several tribes. According to the best information I could obtain, the Santees and Yanktons number 3,000; the Yanktonnais, 4,300; the Blackfeet, 1,500; the Hunkpapas, 2,000; the Brûlés, 2,500; the Sans arcs, 1,000; the Minneconjous, 2,000; the Ogallalas, 1,500; the Two-kettles, 800; the Saones, 2,000; the Unkepatines, 2,000.[14] These are the Sioux of the Missouri. Eight to ten thousand more of them are found on the Mississippi, dispersed in different bands, from the Des Moines to the Red river.

The shape of the Indian lodges is worthy of attention; each tribe has a different form which it is easy to recognize. The Sioux lodges have a gay exterior; they are painted in wavy red, yellow and white lines, or decorated with figures of horses, deer and buffalo, moons, suns and stars.

Among the Sioux, as among the Aricaras, warriors preparing for an expedition undergo a very rigorous fast of several days. They have for this purpose a "medicine" lodge where they spread a buffalo robe and plant a red-painted post; at the top of the lodge is tied a calf-skin containing all sorts of devices. There, to obtain the aid of the Great Spirit, they pierce their breasts, pass leather cords through, attach themselves to the post, and dance thus several times around the lodge to the sound of the drum, singing their warlike exploits and flourishing their warclubs over their heads. Others make deep cuts under their shoulder-blades, run cords through the gashes, and drag two great buffalo heads to an eminence about a mile away from the village; there they dance until they drop senseless. A last offering before setting out consists in cutting off little pieces of flesh from different parts of their bodies, which they offer to the sun, the earth and the four cardinal points, to render the Manitous, or tutelary spirits, of the different elements favorable.

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[14] The Unkepatines and Saones cannot be identified. The latter name was in common use during the period of the fur trade, but seems to have lapsed entirely. There was a Teton-Saone band, and a Sawon (Saone) trading post.

The Sioux who quarrels or dies in a state of drunkenness, or falls victim to the vengeance of a compatriot, does not receive the usual honors of burial; he is interred without ceremony and without provisions. To die in combat with the enemies of the nation is for them the most glorious death. In that case their bodies are wrapped in buffalo skins and placed upon scaffolds near to their camps or to the highways. I have every reason to believe, from several conversations upon religion that I have had with the chiefs of the different tribes, that a mission among them would have the most consoling results.

When I reached Fort Vermillion, a Santee war-party was just back from an excursion against my dear Potawatomies; they brought one scalp with them. The murderers had blackened themselves from head to foot with the exception of their lips, which were rubbed with vermilion. Proud of their victory, they performed their dance in the midst of the camp, carrying the scalp on the end of a long pole. I appeared all at once in their presence and invited them to meet in council. There I reproached them vigorously with their unfaithfulness to the solemn promise they had made me the year before, to live in peace with their neighbors the Potawatomies. I made them feel the injustice they were guilty of in attacking a peaceable nation that wished them nothing but good, and who had even prevented their hereditary foes, the Otoes, Pawnees, Sauks, Foxes and Iowas from coming to invade them. Finally I advised them to employ all means to effect a prompt reconciliation and avoid the terrible reprisal which could not fail to come upon them; being well assured that the Potawatomies and their allies would come soon to take vengeance for their perjury, and perhaps to wipe out their whole tribe. Abashed at their fault and dreading its consequences, they conjured me to serve once more as their mediator, and to assure the Potawatomies of their sincere resolution to bury the hatchet forever.

The next day, the 14th of November, accompanied by an Iroquois half-breed, I embarked upon the Missouri in a canoe; for my horse, worn out with fatigue, was unable to carry me farther. The snow and the cold that followed filled the stream with ice-cakes, which, striking upon the snags of which the river is full, rendered navigation doubly dangerous. We were still 300 miles from Council Bluffs, the first establishment one comes to below the Vermillion, and in a region where all the prairie grasses and plants of the forest had been burned by the Indians to the very banks of the river, and from which in consequence all the animals had withdrawn. We did, however, kill a fine deer, which seemed embarrassed and stood motionless upon the bank of the river as if to receive the mortal blow. Five times we were on the point of perishing by being overturned among the numerous snags, upon which the ice-floes dragged us despite all our efforts. We passed ten days in this dangerous and disquieting navigation, sleeping on sand-bars at night and taking only two meals, evening and morning; besides, we had nothing in the way of food but frozen potatoes and a little fresh meat. The very night of our arrival among our Fathers at Council Bluffs, the river closed. It would be in vain for me to attempt to tell what I felt at finding myself once more amidst our brothers, after having traveled 2,000 Flemish leagues, in the midst of the greatest dangers and across the territories of the most barbarous nations. I had, however, the grief of observing the ravages which unprincipled men, liquor-sellers, had caused in this budding mission; drunkenness, with the invasions of the Sioux on the other hand, had finally dispersed my poor savages. While awaiting a more favorable turn of events, the good Fathers Verreydt and [Christian] Hoeken[15] busy themselves with the cares of their holy ministry among some fifty families that have had the courage to resist these two enemies. I discharged my commission to them from the Sioux, and I venture to hope that in future they will be quiet in that quarter.

I left Council Bluffs on the 14th of December for Westport, a frontier town of Missouri. I met neither obstacle nor accident in the country of the Otoes, Iowas, Sauks, Kickapoos, Delawares and Shawanos, which I traversed. On the night of the 22d I found myself at Father Point's at Westport. On the day following I took the stage in the town of Independence, and on New Year's eve I arrived among my dear brothers at the University of St. Louis.

I am now preparing to return to that untended vineyard of the Lord. I shall start early in the spring, accompanied by two fathers and three brothers of our community. You know that such an undertaking cannot be carried out without proportionate means, and it is a fact that I have nothing assured; all my hope is in Providence and in my friends' zeal; I hope that they will not fail me. I know that you take much interest in this deserving work; this is why I take the liberty of recommending it to your generosity and to that of your friends; the smallest contribution will be a material help.

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[15] The name of this missionary and his brother Adrien, constantly recurring throughout this work, was sometimes spelled "Hoeken" by Father De Smet and his associates, and sometimes "Hoecken." The present editors have preferred to adopt the briefer form, though aware that Father Adrian Hoeken, at least, used the longer in his signature.

I commend myself, as well as my dear neophytes, to your fervent and holy sacrifices, and am, etc.

CHAPTER IV.

A SECOND ACCOUNT OF THE JOURNEY OF 1840.[1]

The start from Westport again — Andrew Drips — The Cheyennes willing to receive missionaries — The polyglot mass at the rendezvous — How the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles welcomed him — They learn their prayers and many receive baptism — The return journey eastward — The Crows — Michael Insula — Across the desert and down the river.

Reverend and Dear Sir:

I PRESUME you are aware that in the beginning of last spring I was sent by the Right Reverend Bishop of St. Louis, and my Provincial, on an exploring expedition to the Rocky Mountains, in order to ascertain the dispositions of the Indians and the prospects of success we might have if we were to establish a mission among them. It is truly gratifying to me to have so favorable a report to make. My occupations do not allow me to enter into all the details; I shall therefore be satisfied at present with giving you a brief sketch of my journey and its result.

I started from Westport on the 30th of April, in company with the annual expedition of the American Fur Company, which for this year had appointed the rendezvous on Green river, a tributary of the Rio Colorado of the West. Captain Drips, who commanded the caravan, treated me on all occasions with the most polite attention. On the sixth day of our journey I was seized with the fever and ague, and have been subject to it for nearly five months. Nothing particularly worth noticing occurred during the journey, except when we halted in the village of the Cheyennes. I was introduced to the chiefs as a minister of the Great Spirit: they showed me great deference, and I was invited to a feast. I had to pass at first through all the ceremonies of the calumet; the great chief approached me to shake hands, and gave me a heartfelt "How do you do." "Black-gown," said he, "my heart was filled with joy when I learned who you were. My lodge never received a visitor for whom I feel a greater esteem. As soon as I was apprised of your coming, I ordered my great kettle to be filled, and in your honor I commanded that my three fattest dogs should be served up." The bravest warriors of the nation partook of the repast, and I availed myself of the opportunity to explain to them the most important tenets of Christianity. I told them the object of my visit, and enquired whether they would not be satisfied to have also Black-gowns among them, who would teach them to love and serve the Great Spirit, as he wished. "Oh yes," they eagerly answered, "we will gladly provide for everything that they stand in need of; they will not die of hunger amongst us." I have no doubt but a zealous missionary would do a great deal of good among them.[2] They are about 2,000 in number. Their language, it is said, is very difficult.

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[1] To the Reverend F. J. Barbelin. Dated St. Louis University, February 4, 1841. Published as Letter I of the *Letters and Sketches.*

On the 30th of June we arrived at the rendezvous. An escort of warriors had been provided for me by the Flatheads. Our meeting was that of children who came to meet their parent, and in the effusion of their heart, they bestowed upon me the fondest names with a simplicity truly patriarchal. They told me of all the interesting particulars of their nation, and of the wonderful preservation of sixty of their men, in a battle against 200 Blackfeet, which lasted five whole days, and in which they killed fifty of their enemies, without losing a single man of their number. "The Great Spirit watched over them;" they said, "he knew that we were to guide you to our camp, and he wanted to clear the road of all the obstacles that you might have found on your way. We trust we will not be annoyed any more by the Blackfeet; they went off weeping like women." We thanked heaven for the signal preservation, and implored its assistance for the new and perilous journey we were on the point of undertaking. The Indians of different nations and the trappers had assembled at the rendezvous in great numbers, for the sake of the trade. On Sunday, the 5th of July, I had the consolation of celebrating the holy sacrifice of mass *sub dio*. The altar was placed on an elevation, and surrounded with boughs and garlands of flowers; I addressed the congregation in French and in English, and spoke also by an interpreter to the Flatheads and Snake Indians. It was a spectacle truly moving for the heart of a missionary, to behold an assembly composed of so many different nations, who all assisted at our holy mysteries with great satisfaction. The Canadians sang hymns in French and Latin, and the Indians in their native tongue. It was truly a Catholic worship. * * * This place has been called since that time, by the French Canadians, *la prairie de la Messe.*

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[2] No formal movement for the conversion of the Cheyennes was, however, made by Catholic priests until 1882. Father De Smet baptized 253 children of the Cheyennes at the Grand Council of 1851. "There are in their midst those still living who remember the great Black Robe and take a pardonable pride in the fact that they were baptized by him."—*Palladino.*

About thirty of the principal chiefs of the Snake Indians invited me to a council. I explained to them the Christian doctrine in a compendious manner — they were all very attentive — they then deliberated among themselves for about half an hour, and one of the chiefs, addressing me in the name of the others, said: "Black-gown, the words of thy mouth have found their way to our hearts; they never will be forgotten. Our country is open for thee; come to teach us what we have to do, to please the Great Spirit, and we will do according to thy words." I advised them to select among themselves a wise and prudent man, who, every morning and evening, should assemble them to offer to Almighty God their prayers and supplications; that there the good chiefs should have an opportunity of exhorting their warriors to behave as they ought. The meeting was held the very same evening, and the great chief promulgated a law, that for the future, the one who would be guilty of theft, or of any other disorderly act, should receive a public castigation. On Monday, the 6th, we proceeded on our journey. A dozen Canadians wished to accompany me, to have an opportunity, as they said, to practice their religion. Eight days afterward we arrived safely in the camp of the Flatheads and Ponderas, or Pend d'Oreilles.

Immediately the whole village was in commotion; men, women and children, all came to meet me and shake hands, and I was conducted in triumph to the lodge of the great chief Tjolizhitzay (Big Face). He has the appearance of an old patriarch. Surrounded by the principal chiefs of the two tribes, and the most renowned warriors, he thus addressed me: "This day Kaikolinzoeten (the Great Spirit) has accomplished our wishes, and our hearts are swelled with joy. Our desire to be instructed was so great, that three times had we deputed our people to the Great Blackgown (the bishop) in St. Louis, to obtain a father. Now, Father, speak, and we will comply with all you will tell us. Show us the road we have to follow, to come to the place where the Great Spirit resides." Then he resigned his authority to me; but I replied that he mistook the object of my coming among them; that I had no other object in view but their spiritual welfare; that with respect to temporal affairs, they should remain as they were, till circumstances should allow them to settle in a permanent spot. Afterward we deliberated on the hours proper for their spiritual exercises and instructions. One of the chiefs brought me a bell, with which I might give the signal.

The same evening about 2,000 persons were assembled before my lodge to recite night prayers in common. I told them the result of my conference with the chiefs; of the plan of instructions which I intended to pursue; and with what disposition they ought to assist at them, etc. Night prayers having been said, a solemn canticle of praise, of their own composition, was sung by these children of the mountains to the Author of their being. It would be impossible for me to describe the emotions I felt at this moment; I wept for joy, and admired the marvelous ways of that kind Providence, who, in his infinite mercy, had deigned to depute me to this poor people, to announce to them the glad tidings of salvation. The next day I assembled the council, and with the assistance of an intelligent interpreter [Gabriel Prudhomme], I translated into their language the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, and four Acts. As I was in the habit of reciting these prayers morning and evening, and before instructions, about a fortnight after I promised a beautiful silver medal to the one who would recite them first. One of the chiefs rising immediately, "Father," said he, smiling, "that medal is mine," and he recited all the prayers without missing a word. I embraced him, praised the eagerness which he had evinced of being instructed, and appointed him my catechist. This good Indian set to work with so much zeal and perseverance, that in less than a fortnight all knew their prayers.

Every morning, at the break of day, the old chief is the first on horseback, and goes round the camp from lodge to lodge. "Now, my children," he exclaims, "it is time to rise; let the first thoughts of your hearts be for the Great Spirit; say that you love him, and beg of him to be merciful unto you. Make haste, our Father will soon ring the bell, open your ears to listen, and your hearts to receive the words of his mouth." Then, if he has perceived any disorderly act on the preceding day, or if he has received unfavorable reports from the other chiefs, he gives them a fatherly admonition. Who would not think that this could only be found in a well-ordered and religious community, and yet it is among Indians in the defiles and valleys of the Rocky Mountains!!! You have no idea of the eagerness they showed to receive religious instruction. I explained the Christian doctrine four times a day, and nevertheless my lodge was filled, the whole day, with people eager to hear more. At night I related those histories of the holy scriptures that were best calculated to promote their piety and edification, and as I happened to observe that I was afraid of tiring them, "Oh, no," they replied, "if we were not afraid of tiring you, we would gladly spend here the whole night."

I conferred the holy sacrament of baptism on 600 of them, and if I thought it prudent to postpone the baptism of others till my return, it was not for want of desire on their part, but chiefly to impress upon their minds a greater idea of the holiness of the sacrament, and of the dispositions that are required to receive it worthily. Among those baptized were the two great chiefs of the Flatheads and of the Ponderas. As I excited the catechumens to a heartfelt contrition of their sins, Walking Bear, chief of the Ponderas, answered: "Father, I have been plunged for a number of years in profound ignorance of good and evil, and no doubt, during that time, I have often greatly displeased the Great Spirit, and therefore I must humbly beseech his pardon. But when I afterward conceived that a thing was bad, I banished it from my heart, and I do not recollect to have since deliberately offended the Great Spirit." Truly, where such dispositions are found, we may well conclude that a rich harvest is to be gathered.

I remained two months among these good people, and every day they were adding to my consolations, by their fervor in prayer, by their assiduity in coming to my instructions, and by their docility in putting into practice what they had been taught.

The season being far advanced, and as I had waited in vain for a safe opportunity to return to St. Louis, I resolved to commit myself entirely to Providence, and on the 27th of August I took leave of my dear neophytes. I appointed one of the chiefs to replace me during my absence, who should preside in their evening and morning devotions, and on the Sabbath exhort them to virtue, baptize the little children, and those who were dangerously ill. Grief was depicted on the features of all, and tears were glistening in every eye. The old chief addressed me, saying, "Father, the Great Spirit accompany thee in thy long and dangerous voyage; every day, morning and evening, we will address to him our humble supplications, that thou mayest arrive safely among thy brethren. And we will continue to do so, till thou be again among thy children of the mountains. We are now like the trees that have been spoiled of their verdure by winter's blast. When the snow will have disappeared from these valleys, and the grass begins to grow, our hearts will begin to rejoice; when the plants spring forth our joy will increase; when they blossom, it will still be greater, and then we will set out to meet you. Farewell, Father, farewell."

The chiefs would not suffer me to depart by myself — thirty of the bravest warriors were deputed as a safeguard to traverse the country of the Blackfeet, who are very hostile to the whites, and they were instructed to accompany me as far as need would be of their assistance. I resolved to take on my return a different route from the one I had taken in coming. I was induced to do so, in order to visit the forts of the American Fur Company on the Missouri and on the Yellowstone, to baptize the children. After five or six days traveling, we fell in with a war-party of the Crow Indians, who received us very kindly, and we traveled together for two days. Then we directed our course to the Big Horn, the most considerable of the tributary streams of the Yellowstone. There we met another party of the same nation, who were also amicably disposed toward us. As there was question about religion, I availed myself of the opportunity to express to them the main articles of the Christian faith, and as I was depicting in lively colors the torments of hell, and had told them that the Great Spirit had kindled this fire of his wrath for those who did not keep the commandments I had explained to them, one of the chiefs uttered a horrid shriek. "If this be the case," said he, "then I believe there are but two in the whole nation who will not go to that place; it is the Beaver and the Mink; they are the only Crows who never stole, who never killed, nor committed all the excesses which your law prohibits. Perhaps I am deceived, and then we must all go together." When I left them on the next day, the chief put a fine bell on my horse's neck, and invited me to take a turn round the village. Next, he accompanied me for six miles.

After several days of a painful journey over rocks and cliffs, we arrived at last at the Fort of the Crows. It is the first the American Fur Company possessed in that country. My dear Flatheads edified all the inhabitants by their fervor and their piety. As well in the fort as on the road, we never missed performing in common our evening and morning devotions, and singing canticles in honor of the Almighty. Frequently, during my stay with them, they had given me abundant proofs of their trust in Providence. I cannot forbear mentioning one instance that occurred during my travels in this place. One day as dinner was preparing and provisions scarce, a countryman of mine, who accompanied me, suggested the propriety of keeping something in reserve for supper. "Be not uneasy," said the chief called Ensyla,[8] "I never missed my supper in my life. I trust in the mercy of the Great Spirit, he will provide for all our wants." We had just camped at night, when the chief killed two stags. "Did I not tell you right?" he remarked, smilingly, to my companion. "You see the Great Spirit does not only provide for our wants of this evening, but he gives us also a supply for to-morrow."

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[8] "Michael" Ensyla or Insula, called also Little Chief and Red Feather; conspicuous throughout Father De Smet's relations with the Flatheads. He had gone in 1835 to Green river to meet Parker and Whitman, and according to Palladino, "discovering in those gentlemen none of the signs of the Black-robe, would not consent to have them come among his people." Parker's journal contains the following mention of him: "Next arose Insala, the most influential chief among the Flathead nation, and said, 'he had heard, a man near to God (meaning a minister of the gospel) was coming to visit them, and he, with some of his people, together with some white men, went out three days' journey to meet him, but missed us. A war-party of Crow Indians came upon them, and took away some of their horses, and one from him which he greatly loved, but now he forgets all, his heart is made so glad to see a man near to God.' There was a short battle, but no lives were lost."

Now began the most difficult and most perilous part of our journey. I had to pass through a country supposed to be overrun by war-parties, of the Blackfeet, Assiniboins, Grosventres, Aricaras and Sioux. All these nations entertained the most hostile dispositions toward the Flatheads. I therefore dispensed with their services any farther. I again excited them to continue the good work they had begun; to be steadfast in their faith; regular in their devotions; charitable toward one another. I embraced them all and took my leave. Mr. John de Velder, a native of Ghent in Belgium, had volunteered his services to me at the rendezvous. In consideration of the bad state of my health, I deemed myself very happy to accept of them; he has never left me since. He was now to be my only traveling companion. As there is no road, we followed the direction of the river; at intervals we were obliged to make immense circuits to avoid the steep and craggy hills that defied our passage. For 200 miles, we had continually death before our eyes. On the second day, I discovered before daylight a large smoke at a distance of about a quarter of a mile. We hastily saddled our horses and following up a ravine we gained a high bluff unperceived. At night we did not dare to make fire for fear of attracting notice. Again about dinner time, we found on the road the carcase of a buffalo, killed only two hours before; the tongue and the marrow-bones with some other dainty pieces had been taken away. Thus the kind Providence of our God took care to supply our wants.

We took a direction contrary to the tracks of the Indians, and spent a safe night in the cliffs of the rocks. The next day we struck upon a spot where forty lodges had been encamped, the fires were yet in full blaze.

Finally, we crossed the Missouri at the same place where, only an hour before, a hundred lodges of ill-minded Assiniboins had passed, and we arrived safe and unmolested at Fort Union, situated a few miles above the mouth of the Yellowstone. In all these forts great harmony and union prevail; Mr. Kipps, [James Kipp] the present administrator of them, is a gentleman well worthy of his station. Everywhere I was treated by these gentlemen with the greatest politeness and kindness, and all my wants were liberally supplied. As I was relating the particulars of this dangerous trip to an Indian chief, he answered: "The Great Spirit has his Manitous; he has sent them to take care of your steps and to trouble the enemies that would have been a nuisance to you." A Christian would have said: *Angelis suis mandavit de te, ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis.*

On the 23d of September we set out for the village of the Mandans, in company with three men of the fort, who had the same destination. We met on the road a party of nineteen Assiniboins, who were returning to their country from an unsuccessful expedition against the Grosventres. Their looks indicated their bad intentions: although we were but five in number, we showed a determined countenance, and we passed unmolested. Next day we crossed a forest, the winter quarters of the Grosventres and Aricaras in 1835. It was there that those unfortunate tribes were nearly exterminated by the smallpox. We saw their bodies wrapped up in buffalo robes, tied to the branches of the largest trees. It was truly a sad and mournful spectacle. Two days later we met the miserable survivors of these unhappy tribes. Only ten families of the Mandans, once such a powerful nation, now remain. They have united with the Grosventres and Aricaras. They received me with great demonstrations of friendship; I spent that night in their camp, and the next day crossed the Missouri in their canoe, made of a buffalo skin. The next day we came to the first village of the Aricaras, and on the following day to their great village, consisting of about a hundred earthen wigwams. This tribe also received me very kindly. On the 6th of October we started from the Mandan village, for Fort Pierre, on the little Missouri; a Canadian, whose destination lay in the same direction, accompanied us,[*] * * * In due time we arrived at Fort Pierre. Thence I traveled through prairies for nineteen days successively. We were often obliged to cook our victuals with dried herbs — not a stick was to be found. When I arrived at Fort Vermillion, * * * I had lost two horses on the road; the one I was riding could hardly support me any longer, and I was yet 300 miles distant from the Council Bluffs. I resolved of course to embark on the Missouri, and engaged a native Iroquois to be my pilot. At first we were favored with fine weather, but this lasted only a few days. Very soon inclement weather set in, with frost and snow; and several times as we drifted down the rapid stream, our frail canoe was on the point of being dashed to pieces against the numberless snags that obstruct its navigation. This dangerous trip lasted ten days. We generally spent the night on a sand-bar. We had only a few frozen potatoes left when we perceived a beautiful deer gazing at us, and apparently waiting to receive its mortal blow. We shot at it. At last we arrived safe at the bluffs, and on the same night the river was closed by ice.

So many escapes from the midst of so many dangers thoroughly convinced me that this undertaking is the work of God — *omnia disponens fortiter et ad finem suam conducens suaviter.* I am now preparing for my return, and will start early in spring, accompanied by three fathers and as many brothers. You are aware such expeditions cannot be undertaken without the necessary means, and the fact is, I have no other reliance than Providence and the kindness of my friends. I hope they will not be wanting. I know that you must feel deeply interested in this meritorious good work, I therefore take the liberty of recommending it to your generosity, and that of your friends — every little contribution will help. I will be very grateful to you, if you have the kindness to forward to my address at the St. Louis University, Mo., before the end of March, or middle of April, the amount you have collected.

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[*] The portions omitted here are nearly identical with corresponding passages in the previous letter.

I recommend myself and my dear neophytes to your good prayers and holy sacrifices, and rest assured that we shall not forget our benefactors.

CHAPTER V.

ST. LOUIS TO THE PLATTE RIVER — 1841.[1]

How Father De Smet raised the money to keep his promises to the Flatheads — Delays at Westport — The mixed company that started — The missionary party — A visit to the Kansas Indians in their village — Father Point's whiskers — White Plume — Catholic and Protestant — The Pawnees.

To the Editor the *Catholic Herald*,
Steamboat *Oceana*, Mo. River,
May 1, 1841.

Reverend and Dear Sir:

I CANNOT set out for my distant mission, without expressing through the medium of your excellent paper, my grateful thanks to the friends who have come forward with such noble and disinterested generosity, and offered the means of carrying the gospel of peace and salvation to the uninstructed savage of the mountains. You, Reverend Sir, who are engaged in the same sublime vocation, the salvation of souls, may form an idea from my former letter of my ardent desire to labor among the poor forsaken children of the Oregon; among whom I resided three months and who hailed my arrival with so much joy; listened with so much eagerness and docility to my instructions, and exhibited in their whole conduct the wonderful fruits which the word of God produced in a few weeks in hearts well disposed.

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[1] This chapter consists of Letter III, *Letters and Sketches*, and Letter I, Second Voyage, *Voyages aux Montagnes Rocheuses*, dated as above in both and addressed respectively to the Father Provincial and to Father De Smet's brothers Charles and Francis. The published letters also contain a brief account of a case of human sacrifice among the Pawnees, which is omitted here because described more fully elsewhere in this work. The English text is followed in the main.

I had visited them only for the purpose of ascertaining the prospect of forming a permanent establishment for their entire conversion. I was, of course, obliged to return, in order to report the result of my observations to my superior. When about to leave, my good neophytes crowded around me, as children around a beloved parent; their tears and sobs told how truly they grieved for our separation. The only consolation that I could offer then was the assurance that I would return in the spring. This was my promise; this, their hope. "Father," said they in their simple and beautiful language, "Father, when the snow shall have disappeared from these hills, we shall think of your return; when the plants begin to spring forth, we shall set out to meet you. Farewell!"

We parted. I repassed the mountains, traversed the prairies and forests under the guidance of the good angels who had charge to watch over me. On my arrival at St. Louis, I gave an account to my superior of my journey and of the flattering prospects which the mission beyond the Rocky Mountains held out. You will easily believe me when I tell you that my heart sank within me on learning from him that the funds at his disposal for missionary purposes would not enable him to afford me scarcely the half of what would be necessary for the outfit and other expenses of an expedition. The thought that the undertaking would have been given up, that I would not be able to redeem my promise to the poor Indians, pierced my very heart and filled me with the deepest sorrow. I would have desponded had I not already experienced the visible protection of the Almighty in the prosecution of this great work. My confidence in him was unabated. Whilst in this state of mind one of my friends encouraged me to appeal to the zealous and learned coadjutor of Philadelphia and to his indefatigable clergy. I immediately acted upon the thought. I did appeal and with what success the Catholic public already know. To the Bishop who gave his sanction to the plan of a general and simultaneous collection throughout his diocese; to the clergy of the different churches of the city who so kindly interested themselves in this good work and proposed it to their congregations; to the generous people of Philadelphia who so liberally responded to the call of their pastors, I return my sincere thanks and will daily beg the father of mercies to reward them with his choicest blessings.

I must not omit to mention of other generous contributors. After having written to Philadelphia I was advised to visit New Orleans and recommend the cause of the Indians to the good Bishop of that city and to his clergy and people. I did so. The Bishop received me with great kindness; gave his approbation to a collection, and placed his name first on the list. His clergy followed his example. As I had only a few days at my disposal, I thought it was best to solicit subscriptions through several generous ladies who offered themselves for this purpose. In the space of three or four days, they collected nearly $1,000. You have no idea with what spirit the pious portion of the people entered into the affair. Almost every moment of my stay persons came to offer me something for the Indian mission. Several ladies gave me various trinkets, such as ear-rings, bracelets, and ornaments of every description; others brought implements and articles, which will be of great use in the Indian country. In a word, Reverend Sir, I left New Orleans with $1,100 in cash and six boxes full of various and most useful articles. From the Reverend Mr. Durbin of Kentucky I received $300, and the Reverend Jno. O'Reilly remitted $140, the amount collected in St. Paul's Church, Pittsburg. St. Louis supplied the balance of what was necessary for the outfit, the expenses of the journey and the commencement of the establishment in the Indian country. To the Bishops and to the zealous clergy and laity of Philadelphia and New Orleans; to the clergy and laity of other places who aided the good cause; in a word, to all the benefactors of the mission beyond the Rocky Mountains, I again return my sincere thanks. Myself and my fellow-laborers will teach our neophytes to pray for those who have been instrumental in procuring them so much good. In conclusion, Reverend Sir, I would solicit your fervent prayers and those of all good Christians, who may read this account. Our journey is perilous in the extreme. We must pass through the countries of hostile tribes — tribes that thirst for the blood of the white man. I hope, therefore, that reverend brethren will not forget us at the holy altar; and that the pious Christians who are interested in our mission will sometimes offer up for us a Pater and Ave. The expedition will leave Westport about the 12th of May.

Your obedient servant, etc.

Reverend and Very Dear Father Provincial:

Behold us at last on our way toward the long-wished for Rocky Mountains, already inured to the fatigues of the journey and full of the brightest hopes. It is now afternoon and we are sitting on the banks of a river which, it is said, has not its equal in the world. The Indians call it Nebraska or Big Horn; the Canadians give it the name of la Platte;[2] and Irving designates it, as the most magnificent and useless of rivers. The sequel will show that it deserves these various affixes. It was to enjoy the freshness and beauty of its scenery that we traveled more than twenty miles this morning, without breaking our fast, through a wilderness without a single rivulet to water our jaded horses, who must therefore rest where they are till to-morrow. I am far from regretting the delay, as it will give me an opportunity of commencing a letter which, I know, will interest you.

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[2] The name Platte is characteristic and arises from the extremely shallow character of the stream. Its use dates from 1739. In that year two brothers, Mallet, with six companions, undertook to reach Santa Fe from a point on the Missouri somewhere near the present site of Sioux City. They left the river on the 29th of May and arrived at the Platte June 2. (*Le 2 Juin ils tombèrent sur une rivière qu' ils nommèrent la Rivière Platte.*" De Margry.) The party ascended the main stream and the South Fork to the mountains and reached Santa Fe on the 22d of July.

Like all the works of God, our humble beginnings have not been unattended with trials: our journey had even well nigh been indefinitely deferred by the postponement of two caravans on which we had confidently relied; one of hunters, for the American Fur Company; the other an exploring expedition belonging to the United States, at the head of which we expected to see the celebrated M. Nicollet. Happily God inspired two estimable travelers, [named Romaine and Baker] of whom more hereafter, and afterward some sixty others,[8] to take the same route as ourselves, some for health, others for science or pleasure; but the greater number to seek their fortune in the too highly boasted land of California. This caravan formed an extraordinary mixture of different nations, every country of Europe having in it a representative, my own little band of eleven persons hailing from eight.

The difficulties of setting out once overcome, many others followed in succession. We had need of provisions, fire-arms, implements of every kind, wagons, guides, a good hunter, an experienced captain,—in a word, whatever becomes necessary when one has to traverse a desert of 800 leagues, and expects nothing but formidable obstacles to surmount, and thieving, and sometimes murderous, enemies to combat,—and swamps, ravines and rivers to cross, and mountains to climb, whose craggy and precipitous sides suddenly arrest our progress, compelling us to drag our beasts of burden up their steep ascents. These things are not done without toil and money, but thanks to the generous charity of our friends in Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Kentucky, St. Louis and New Orleans, which place I visited in person and which is always at the head of the others when there is a question of relieving the necessities of the poor, or showing compassion and munificence to any who may be in need of assistance, we were enabled by the resources thence supplied, and by a portion of the funds allowed by the Lyons Association in behalf of the Indian Missions, to undertake this long journey.

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[8] The remains of the "Western Emigration Society," organized in Weston, Missouri, the preceding winter, with 500 members, all but one of whom (John Bidwell) withdrew before the time set for starting—discouraged, it is said, by Thomas J. Farnham's published account of California. The party as made up was composed of emigrants from Missouri, an invalid named George Henshaw from Illinois, three families from Arkansas, and others. It was commanded by John Bartleson, and guided by Thomas Fitzpatrick.

You have already learned from my letters of the past year, that I was specially sent among the Flatheads to ascertain their dispositions toward the Black-gowns, whom they had so long desired. I therefore started from St. Louis in April, 1840, and arrived on the banks of the Colorado precisely at the moment when a band of Flatheads reached that point on their way to meet me. It was the rendezvous I had given them. Besides the Flatheads, I visited during that journey many other tribes, such as the Pend d'Oreilles (Ear Rings) or Kalispels, Nez Percés (Pierced Noses) or Sapetans, Cheyennes, Snakes or Shoshones, Crows or Absarokas, Grosventres or Minnetarees, Aricaras, Mandans, Kansas, the numerous nations of the Sioux or Dakotas, the Omahas, Otoes, Iowas, etc. Finding everywhere such good dispositions, I resolved, notwithstanding the approach of winter and frequent attacks of fever, in order to second the visible designs of the divine mercy in favor of so many souls, to commence my journey across the immense ocean of mountains and prairies. I have traveled without any other guide than a compass, without any protection from nations hostile to the whites, but a veteran from Ghent, formerly a grenadier of the Empire, any other provisions, in an arid desert, than what powder and ball and a strong confidence in God might procure us.

I shall not here repeat what I have already communicated to you, of my adventures and the result of this mission. It will suffice to say that the unexpected quickness of my return to St. Louis, the excellent health I enjoyed, even though it was the midst of winter, and the consoling accounts I had to give of my reception by the Flatheads, etc., etc., all contributed to make the most lively impression on the hearts of our brethren. Almost every one thought himself called to share the labors of a mission which offered so many attractions to their zeal. After due deliberation, the fellow-laborers allotted me were five in number, namely, two Fathers, Reverend Nicolas Point[4] of La Vendée, as zealous and courageous for the salvation of souls as his compatriot, La Roche Jacquelin, was in the service of his lawful sovereign. Reverend Gregory Mengarini,[5] recently from Rome, specially selected by the Father General himself for this mission, on account of his age, his virtues, his great facility for languages and his knowledge of medicine and music; and three lay-brothers, two Belgians, William Claessens[6] and Charles Huet, and one German, Joseph Specht,[7] of whom the first is a blacksmith, the second a carpenter, and the third a tinner, or a sort of *factotum;* all three industrious, devoted to the missions and full of good will. They had long ardently desired to be employed on these missions and I thank God

[4] Father Point remained among the Blackfeet until the spring of 1847, when an order from his superiors in France, which had, according to Palladino, been three years on the road, recalled him to the missions of Upper Canada. It was his desire, as appears from letters in Father De Smet's correspondence, in later years to return to the Northwest. He died at Quebec, July 4, 1868. A volume of Indian drawings, apparently his work, is preserved at the University of St. Louis.

[5] Father Mengarini was transferred to California in 1850 and died at Santa Clara September 23, 1866.

[6] Brother Claessens remained among the Indians until 1891, when he was ordered to California. He died at Santa Clara on the 11th of October of that year at the age of eighty.

[7] Brother Specht died at St. Ignatius Mission June 17, 1884, aged seventy-six.

that had the choice been left to myself, I could have made none better. Thus launched into the midst of this interminable Far West, how often did I repeat these beautiful lines of Racine:

> O Dieu, par quelles routes inconnues aux mortels
> Ta Sagesse conduit tes desseins eternels!

In seven days from my departure from St. Louis, namely on the 30th of April, I arrived at Westport, a frontier town on the west of the United States. It took us seven days, on board a steamboat, to perform this journey of 500 [390] miles, no unfair average of the time required to travel such a distance on the Missouri at the breaking up of the winter, when, though the ice is melted, the water is still so low, the sand-banks so close together and the snags so numerous that boats cannot make greater headway. * * * We landed on the right bank of the river, and took refuge in an abandoned little cabin, where a poor Indian woman had died a few days before, and in this retreat, so like to that which once merited the preference of the Savior and for which was thenceforth to be substituted only the shelter of a tent in the wilderness, we took up our abode until the 10th of May — occupied as well we might be in supplying the wants created by the burning of our baggage wagon on board the steamboat, the sickness of one of our horses which we were compelled to leave after us, and the loss of another that escaped from us at the moment of landing.

We started, then, from Westport, on the 10th of May, and after having passed by the lands of the Shawnees and Delawares, where we saw nothing remarkable but the college of the Methodists, built, it is easy to divine for what, where the soil is richest; we arrived after five days' march on the banks of the Kansas river, where we found those of our companions who had traveled by water, with a part of our baggage. Two of the relatives of the grand chief had come twenty miles from that place to meet us, one of whom helped our horses to pass the river in safety, by swimming before them, and the other announced our arrival to the principal men of the tribe who waited for us on the opposite bank. Our baggage, wagons and men crossed in a pirogue, or hollowed tree trunk, which, at a distance, looked like one of those gondolas that glide through the streets of Venice. As soon as the Kansas understood that we were going to encamp on the banks of the Soldier's river, which is only six miles from the village, they galloped rapidly away from our caravan, disappearing in a cloud of dust, so that we had scarcely pitched our tents when the great chief presented himself with six of his bravest warriors, to bid us welcome. After having made me sit down on a mat spread on the ground, he, with much solemnity, took from his pocket a portfolio containing the honorable titles, bestowed by the American Congress, that gave him a right to our friendship, and placed them in my hands. I read them, and having, with the tact of a man accustomed to the etiquette of savage life, furnished him the means of smoking the calumet, he made us accept for our guard the two braves who had come to meet us. Both were armed like warriors, one carrying a lance and a buckler, and the other a bow and arrows, with a naked sword and a collar made of the claws of four bears which he had killed with his own hand. These two braves remained faithful at their post during the three days and three nights that we had to wait the coming up of the stragglers of the caravan. A small present which we made them at our departure secured us their friendship.

On the 19th we continued our journey to the number of seventy souls, fifty of whom were capable of managing the rifle — a force more than sufficient to undertake with prudence the long march we had to make. Whilst the rest of our company inclined to the west, Father Point, a young Englishman [Romaine] and myself turned to the left, to visit the nearest village of our hosts. At the first sight of their wigwams, we were struck at the resemblance they bore to the large stacks of wheat which cover our fields in harvest time. There were of these in all no more than about twenty, grouped together without order, but each covering a space of about 120 feet in circumference, and sufficient to shelter from thirty to forty persons. The entire village appeared to us to consist of from seven to eight hundred souls — an approximation which is justified by the fact that the total population of the tribe is confined to two villages, together numbering 1,500 inhabitants.

These cabins, however humble[8] they may appear, are solidly built and convenient. From the top of the wall, which is about six feet in height, rise inclined poles, which terminate round an opening above, serving at once for chimney and window. The door of the edifice consists of an undressed hide on the most sheltered side, the hearth occupies the center and is in the midst of four upright posts destined to support the *rotunda;* the beds are ranged round the wall and the space between the beds and the hearth is occupied by the members of the family, some standing, others sitting or lying on skins, or yellow colored mats. It would seem that this last-named article is regarded as a piece of extra finery, for the lodge assigned to us had one of them.

It would be impossible to describe all the curiosities we beheld during the hour we passed among these truly strange beings; a Teniers would have envied us. What most excited our attention was the strongly characterized physiognomy of the greater number of these personages, their vivacity of expression, singular costume, diversity of amusement and fantastic attitudes and gestures. The women alone were occupied, and in order to attend to their various duties with less distraction, they had placed those of their papooses who were unable to walk, on beds or on the floor, or at their feet, each tightly swathed and fastened to a board, to preserve it from being injured by surrounding objects. This machine, which I shall not call either cradle or chair, is carried, when they travel, either on the back, after the fashion of the gypsies and fortune-tellers in Europe, or at their side, or more frequently suspended from the pommel of the saddle, while they lead or drive their ponies, laden with the rest of their goods and chattels. With such encumbrances they manage to keep pace with their husbands, who generally keep their horses at a gallop; and the babies are rarely heard to cry. But let us return to our wigwam. How were the men occupied? When we entered, some were preparing to eat, (this is their great occupation when they are not asleep) others were smoking, discharging the fumes of the tobacco by their mouths and nostrils, reminding one of the funnels of a steamboat; they talked, they plucked out their beard and the hair of their eyebrows, they made their toilette; the head receiving particular attention. Contrary to the custom of the other tribes, who let the hair on their heads grow, (one of the Crows has hair eleven feet long) the Kansas shave theirs, with the exception of a well curled tuft on the crown, destined to be wreathed with the warrior's plume of eagle's feathers, the proudest ornament with which the human head can be adorned. While we were smoking I could not help watching the motions of a young savage, a sort of dandy, who ceased not to arrange, over and over again, his bunch of feathers before a looking glass, apparently unable to give it the graceful finish he intended. Father Point, having suffered his beard to grow, soon became an object of curiosity and laughter, to the children — a beardless chin, a shaved head and well picked brows and eye-lashes being, among them, indispensable to beauty. Next come the Plume and Slit-ears, with their pendants of beads and other trinkets. This is but a part of their finery, and the pains thus taken to reach the *beau-ideal* of personal decorations, are but a faint specimen of their vanity. Do you wish to have an idea of a Kansa satisfied with himself in the highest degree? Picture him to yourself with rings of vermilion encircling his eyes, with white, black or red streaks running down his face, a fantastic necklace, adorned in the center with a large medal of silver or copper, dangling on his breast; bracelets of tin, copper or brass, on his arms and wrists; a cincture of white around his waist, a cutlass and scabbard, embroidered shoes or moccasins on his feet; and, to crown all, a mantle, it matters not for the color, thrown over the shoulders and falling around the body in such folds or drapery as the wants or caprice of the wearer may direct, and the individual stands before you as he exhibited himself to us.

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[8] Fr. humides.

As for dress, manners, religion, modes of making war, etc., the Kansas are like the savages of their neighborhood, with whom they have preserved peaceful and friendly relations from time immemorial. In stature, they are generally tall and well made. Their physiognomy is manly, their language is guttural, and remarkable for the length and strong accentuation of the final syllables. Their style of singing is monotonous, whence it may be inferred that the enchanting music heard on the rivers of Paraguay never cheers the voyager on the otherwise beautiful streams of the country of the Kansas.

With regard to the qualities which distinguish man from the brute, they are far from being deficient. To bodily strength and courage they unite a shrewdness and address superior to other savages, and in their wars or the chase they make a dexterous use of fire-arms, which gives them a decided advantage over their enemies.

Among the chiefs of this tribe are found men really distinguished in many respects. The most celebrated was White Plume, whom the author of the *Conquest of Granada*[9] represents as a man of great powers of mind and chivalrous character. He was endowed with uncommon intelligence, frankness, generosity and courage. He had been particularly acquainted with Reverend Mr. De la Croix,[10] one of the first Catholic missionaries that visited that part of the West, and conceived for him and his colleagues, the "Black-robes," profound esteem. His feelings toward the Protestant missionaries were far different. He had neither esteem nor veneration for them or their reformation. When on a certain occasion one of them spoke to him of conversion; "conversion," said the unsophisticated savage, " is a good thing when the change is made for something good. For my part, I know none such but what is taught and practiced by the Black-robes. If then you desire me to change, you must first quit your wife and then put on the habit I shall show you, and then we shall see further." This habit was a priest's cassock, which a missionary had left him with the memory of his virtues. We presume we need not add that these hard conditions were not complied with by the preacher.

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[9] Irving in *Captain Bonneville*, chapter II.

It is not to be inferred from the apparent pleasantry of this remark that the chief spoke lightly of religion; on the contrary, the Kansas, like all the Indian tribes, never speak on the subject without becoming solemnity. The more they are observed the more evident does it become that the religious sentiment is deeply implanted in their souls, and is, of all others, that which is most frequently expressed by their words and actions. Thus, for instance, they never take the calumet, without first rendering some homage to the Great Spirit. In the midst of their most infuriate passions they address him certain prayers, and even in assassinating a defenseless child, or a woman, they invoke the Master of life. To be enabled to take many a scalp from their enemies, or to rob them of many horses, becomes the object of their most fervid prayers, to which they sometimes add fasts, macerations and sacrifices. What did they not do last spring, to render the heavens propitious? And for what? To obtain the power, in the absence of their warriors, to massacre all the women and children of the Pawnees! And in effect they carried off the scalps of ninety victims, and made prisoners of all whom they did not think proper to kill. In their eyes, revenge, far from being a horrible vice, is the first of virtues, the distinctive mark of great souls, and a complete vindication of the most atrocious cruelty. It would be time lost to attempt to persuade them that there can be neither merit nor glory in the murder of a disarmed and helpless foe. There is but one exception to this barbarous code; it is when an enemy voluntarily seeks a refuge in one of their villages. As long as he remains in it, his asylum is inviolable — his life is more safe than it would be in his own wigwam. But woe to him if he attempt to fly — scarcely has he taken a single step, before he restores to his hosts all the imaginary rights which the spirit of vengeance had given them to his life!

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[10] Charles De la Croix, born in 1792 in Flanders: came to America in 1817. Besides filling a number of posts for the Society in the west, he made two sojourns among the Osage Indians as missionary. He returned to Ghent in 1839 and died August 20, 1869.

However cruel they may be to their foes, the Kansas are no strangers to the tenderest sentiments of piety, friendship and compassion. They are often inconsolable for the death of their relations, and leave nothing undone to give proof of their sorrow. Then only do they suffer their hair to grow — long hair being a sign of long mourning. The principal chief apologized for the length of his hair, informing us of what we could have divined from the sadness of his countenance, that he had lost his son. I wish I could represent to you the respect, astonishment and compassion expressed on the countenances of three others, when they visited our little chapel at Westport [where Father Point had been stationed] for the first time. When we showed them an "Ecce Homo" and a statue of our Lady of the seven Dolours, and the interpreter explained to them that that head crowned with thorns, and that countenance defiled with insults, were the true and real image of a God who had died for the love of us, and that the heart they saw pierced with seven swords was the heart of his mother, we beheld an affecting illustration of the beautiful thought of Tertullian, that the soul of man is naturally Christian! On such occasions, it is surely not difficult, after a short instruction on true faith and the love of God, to excite feelings of pity for their fellow creatures in the most ferocious bosoms.

What were the Iroquois before their conversions, and what have they not since become? Why do the Kansas and so many other tribes on the confines of civilization still retain that savage ferocity of manners? Why have the great sums expended in their behalf by Protestant philanthropy produced no satisfactory results? Why are the germs of civilization so thickly scattered by their learned societies among these tribes, as it were, stricken with sterility? Ah! it is doubtless because something more than human policy and zeal of Protestantism is necessary to civilize the savage and make them Christians. May the God of Mercies, in whom we alone place all our trust, bless our undertaking and enable us to predict that our sweat, mixed with the fertilizing dew of heaven, will fall auspiciously on this long barren earth, and make it produce something else besides briars and thorns!

When we took leave of our hospitable hosts, two of their warriors, to one of whom they gave the title of Captain, escorted us a short distance on the road, which lay through a vast field which had been cleared and planted for them by the United States, but which had been ravaged before the harvest home — sad proof of what we have stated above. Our escort continued with us until the day following, and would have remained with us still longer, did they not fear the terrible reprisals of the Pawnees for the massacre committed some months previously. Having therefore received our thanks and a portion of tobacco, they resumed the road to their village, just in time to escape the vengeance of a party of Pawnees, whom we met two days later, in quest of the Kansas!

The Pawnees are divided into four tribes,[11] scattered over the fertile borders of the Platte and upon the upper branches of the Kansas rivers. Though six times more numerous than the Kansas, they have almost on every occasion been conquered by the latter, because they are far inferior to them in the use of arms, and in strength and courage. Yet as the party just mentioned seemed to have adopted decisive measures, and as their thirst of revenge had been stimulated to the highest degree by the still fresh recollection of what their mothers, their wives and children had suffered, we had reason to fear for the Kansas. Already we fancied that we saw the blood streaming on all sides, when, two days after we had passed them, we saw them returning. The two first who approached us excited our attention, the one by a human scalp which hung suspended from the neck of his horse, the other by an American flag, which he had wrapped around his body in the form of a cloak. This kind of attire made us tremble for the fate of our hosts; but the captain of the caravan having asked them by signs concerning the result of their expedition, they informed us that they had not even seen the enemy, and that they suffered much from the cravings of hunger. We gave to them, and to about fifteen others who followed them, both victuals and tobacco. They devoured the victuals, but did not smoke; and, contrary to the custom of the Indians, who generally expect to get a second meal after the first, they left us in a manner which indicated that they were dissatisfied. The suddenness of their departure, their refusal to smoke the calumet, the unexpected return of their party, the neighborhood of their villages, and their well-known love of plunder — in short, everything induced us to fear that they had some design to make an attempt, if not upon our persons, at least upon the horses and baggage; but, God be praised, not one reappeared after the departure of the party.

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[11] The Grand, Republican, Tapage and Wolf or Loup bands; names explained in various ways, like most Indian names that the white man has tried to account for.

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CHAPTER VI.[1]

FROM THE PLATTE RIVER TO THE BITTER ROOT VALLEY.[2]

The "Flathead Embassies"— Meeting with the forerunners of the tribe — Their enthusiasm — Frank Ermatinger — Parting from the American emigrants — Friendly though disagreeing — Devil's Gate on the Sweetwater — Halt on Green river — Mountain trails and amateur teamsters — More Snake Indians — Features of Bear river — Over the divide to Fort Hall — Meeting with the Flathead escort — Insula and Big Face — Northward to the Deer Lodge valley — Perils of western travel — River crossings and Indian alarms — Interview with the Bannocks.

Fort Hall, Aug. 16, 1841.

IT was on the eve of the beautiful festival of the Assumption that we met the vanguard of the Flatheads. We met under the happiest auspices, and our joy was proportionate. The joy of the savage is not openly manifested — that of our dear neophytes was tranquil; but from the beaming serenity of their looks, and the feeling manner in which they pressed our hands, it was easy to perceive that, like the joy which has its source in virtue, theirs was heartfelt and profound. What had they not done to obtain a mission of "Black-gowns?" For twenty years they had not ceased to supplicate the Father of Mercies; for twenty years, in compliance with the counsels of some poor Iroquois, who had established themselves in their tribe, they had conformed, as nearly as they could, to our creed and manners, and even to our religious practices. In what Catholic parish was the Sunday, for example, ever more religiously observed? — During the ten years just elapsed, four deputations, each starting from the banks of the Bitter Root, on which they usually assemble, had courageously ventured to St. Louis, over a space of 3,000 miles,— over mountains and valleys, infested by Blackfeet and other hostile tribes.

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[1] This chapter consists of Letters V and VI, *Letters and Sketches*, addressed to the Father Provincial and dated respectively Fort Hall, August 16, 1841, and Big Face's Camp (Beaver Head river), September 1, 1841; paralleled by Letters III and IV, Second Voyage, *Voyages aux M.-R.*, dated as above and without address. The English text is followed in the main.

[2] For original chapter omitted here, see p. 1345.

Of the first deputation, which started in 1831, three died of diseases produced by the change of climate. The second embassy reached its destination; but owing to the great want of missionaries in the Diocese of St. Louis, received nothing but promises. The third, which set out in 1837, consisted of five members, all of whom were unmercifully massacred by the Sioux. All these crosses, however, were insufficient to abate their zeal. In 1839, they sent two Iroquois deputies, one of whom was named Peter, and the other Young Ignatius, to distinguish him from another called Old Ignatius. These they earnestly advised to make still more pressing entreaties to obtain the long-sought blessing, a "Black-gown, to conduct them to heaven." Their prayers were, at length, heard, even beyond their hopes. One Black-gown was granted, together with a promise of more, if necessary for their greater good. While Peter returned in haste to the tribe to acquaint them with the complete success of their mission, Ignatius remained at Westport, to accompany the promised missionary. I had the happiness to be that missionary; I visited the nation, and became acquainted, in person, with their wants, their dispositions, and the necessities of the neighboring tribes. After an absence of a year, I was now returning to them, no longer alone, but with two Fathers, three artisan brothers, and all that was essential to the success of the expedition. They themselves had traveled upwards of 800 miles to meet us, and now that we were together, both parties were full of vigor and hope. What joy must not these good Indians, at that moment, have experienced? Being unable, however, to express their happiness, they were silent: their silence surely could not be ascribed to a deficiency of intelligence or a want of sentiment, for the Flatheads are full of feeling, and many are truly intelligent. These, too, were the *élite* of the nation. Judge of it by what follows.

The chief of this little embassy, named Wistilpo, portrayed himself in the following address to his companions, a few days subsequently, on viewing the plan of the first hamlet [réduction]: "My dear children," said he, "I am but an ignorant and wicked man, yet I thank the Great Spirit for the favors which he has conferred on us,—(and entering here into an admirable detail, he concluded thus:) Yes, my dear friends, my heart has found content; notwithstanding my wickedness I despair not of the goodness of God. Henceforth, I wish to live only that I may pray; I will never abandon prayer (religion); I will pray until the end of my life, and when I die I will commit myself into the hands of the Author of life; if he condemn me, I shall submit to his will, for I have deserved punishment; if he save me, I shall bless him forever. Once more, then, my heart has found content.— What shall we do to evince the love we bear our Fathers?" Here he made practical resolutions, but I must hasten to commemorate the zeal of each of those who formed the embassy.

Simon, who had been baptized the preceding year, was the oldest of the nation, and was so burdened with the weight of years, that even when seated, he needed a stick for his support. Yet, he had no sooner ascertained that we were on our route to join the tribe, than mounting his horse and mingling with the young warriors who were prepared to go forth to meet us, he said: "My children, I shall accompany you; if I die on the way, our Fathers, at least, will know the cause of my death." During the course of the journey, he repeatedly exhorted his companions: "Courage, my children," he would say, "remember that we are going to the presence of our Fathers;" and urging his steed forward, whip in hand, he led on his youthful followers, at the rate of fifty miles per day.

Francis, a boy from six to seven years old, grandson of Simon, was an orphan from the very cradle. Having served at the altar, the preceding year, he would not be refused permission to accompany his grandfather: his heart told him that he was about to recover father and mother, and enjoy all the happiness that loving parents can bestow.

Ignatius, who had advised the fourth deputation, and had been a member of it,— who had succeeded in his mission, and introduced the first Black-gown into the tribe,— who had just recently exposed himself to new dangers, in order to introduce others, had crowned his zealous exertions by running for days without eating or drinking, solely that he might reach us the sooner.

Pilchimo, his companion and brother to one of the martyrs of the third deputation, was a young warrior, already reputed brave among the brave. The preceding year, his presence of mind and his courage had saved seventy of his brethren in arms from the fury of nearly 1,900 Blackfeet who had surrounded them.

Francis Xavier[3] was the son of old Ignatius, who had been the leader of the second and third deputation, and had fallen a victim to his devotion to the cause of religion and of his brethren. Francis Xavier had gone to St. Louis at the age of ten, in the company of his courageous father, solely that he might have the happiness of receiving baptism. He had finally attached himself without reserve to the service of the mission, and supplied our table with a daily mess of fish.

Gabriel, [Prudhomme] who was of mixed blood, but an adopted child of the nation, was interpreter for the missionaries. Being the first to join us on the banks of Green river, he merited the title of precursor of the Flatheads. His bravery and zeal had four[4] times induced him to travel for our sakes, over a space of 400 miles, which separated us from the main camp.

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[3] Still living (1903) near Arlee, Montana, where his ranch may be seen from passing trains. He is commonly called François Saxa (meaning Iroquois) or Lamousse, and is a most respected citizen.

[4] Fr. three.

Such were they who now greeted us. Let them tell their own story.

They had prayed daily to obtain for me a happy journey and a speedy return. Their brethren continued in the same good disposition; almost all, even children and old men, knew by heart the prayers which I had taught them the preceding year. Twice on every week day, and three times on each Sunday, the assembled tribe recited prayers in common. Whenever they moved their camp, they carried with them, as an ark of safety, the box of church ornaments left in their custody. Five or six children, whom I had baptized, had gone to heaven during my absence; the very morrow of my departure, a young warrior whom I had baptized the day previous, died in consequence of a wound received from the Blackfeet about three months before.—Another, who had accompanied me as far as the Fort of the Crows, and was as yet but a catechumen, died of sickness in returning to the tribe, but in such happy dispositions that his mother was perfectly consoled for his loss by the conviction that his soul was in heaven. A girl, about twelve years of age, seeing herself on the point of dying, had solicited baptism with such earnestness that she was baptized by Peter the Iroquois, and received the name of Mary.—After having sung a canticle in a stronger voice than usual, she died, saying: "Oh, how beautiful! I see Mary, my mother." So many favors from heaven were calculated to instigate the malice of hell. The enemies of salvation had accordingly attempted to sow the cockle among the good grain, by suggesting to the chiefs of the tribe that my conduct would be like that of so many others, who, "once gone, had never returned." But the head chief had invariably replied: "You wrong our Father; he is not double-tongued, like so many others. He has said: 'I will return,' and he will return, I am sure." The interpreter added that it was this conviction which had impelled the venerable old man, notwithstanding his advanced age, to place himself at the head of the detachment bound for Green river; that they had arrived at the rendezvous on the 1st of July, which was the appointed day; that they had remained there till the 16th, and would have continued to occupy the same position, had not the scarcity of provisions obliged them to depart. He stated also that the whole tribe had determined to fix upon some spot as a site for a permanent village; that, with this view, they had already chosen two places which they believed to be suitable; that nothing but our presence was required to confirm their determination, and they relied with such implicit confidence on our speedy arrival, that the head chief, on starting from Green river, had left there three men to await us, advising them to hold that position until no longer tenable.

Here, I have much to relate that is not less edifying than curious; but before I enter upon the chapter of noble actions, I must conclude what I had commenced in my preceding letter. But I feel bound, before all, to pay Mr. Ermatinger,[5] the captain of Fort Hall, the tribute of gratitude which we owe him.

Although a Protestant by birth, this noble Englishman gave us a most friendly reception. Not only did he repeatedly invite us to his table, and sell us, at first cost, or at one-third of its value, in a country so remote, whatever we required; but he also added, as pure gifts, many articles which he believed would be particularly acceptable. He did more: he promised to recommend us to the good will of the Governor of the honorable English Hudson Bay Company, who was already prepossessed in our favor; and, what is still more deserving of praise, he assured us that he would second our ministry among the populous nation of the Snakes, with whom he has frequent intercourse. So much zeal and generosity give him a claim to our esteem and gratitude. May heaven return to him a hundredfold the benefits he has conferred on us!

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[5] Francis or Frank Ermatinger (often spelled Ermantinger), an Englishman by birth, prominent as an agent of the Hudson Bay Company; met with at Fort Okinagan, Oregon City, on Red river and elsewhere; connected by marriage with Dr. John McLoughlin; probably at Fort Hall at this time to compete for the Flathead and Nez Percé trade with the American companies. Said to have died in Canada, and to have had a brother, who may be confused with him in some places.

It was at Fort Hall that we took our final leave of the American colony, with which we had, till then, pursued the same route. It was previously to this, while we were yet at Green river, that those who came to that wild region merely for information or pleasure, had turned back, with some fewer illusions than when they started out upon the journey. They were five or six in number.[6] Among them was a young Englishman, who had been our messmate from St. Louis. In taking leave of us, this young man, who was in many respects estimable, assured us that, if Providence should ever again throw us together, the meeting would give him the highest satisfaction, and that he would always be happy to do us all the service in his power. He was of a good English family, and like most of his countrymen, fond of travel: he had already seen the four quarters of the globe; but *qui multum peregrinantur*. * * * He cherished so many prejudices, however, against the Catholic religion, that, despite all our good wishes, we were of no service to him in the most essential relation. We recommended him to our friends. I have treasured up one of his beautiful reflections: "One must travel in the desert to witness the watchful care of Providence over the wants of man."

They who had started purely with the design of seeking their fortune in California, and were pursuing their enterprise with the constancy which is characteristic of Americans, had left us, but a few days before our arrival at the fort, in the vicinity of the boiling springs which empty into Bear river. There now remained with us but few of the party, who had come to the fort in order to revictual. Among the latter were the leader of the colony,[7] and a reputed deacon of the Methodist Episcopalian sect [named Williams]. Both were of a peaceable disposition, and manifested for us the highest regard; but the former, like so many others, being very indifferent as to religious matters, held as a maxim, "that it was best to have no religion, or else to adopt that of the country in which we live;" and wishing to display his great Bible erudition, he in proof of his paradox, cited as a text of St. Paul the ancient proverb: *Si fueris Romæ, Romano vivite more.* The minister was of the same opinion, but yet he wished some religion, it being well understood that his was the best. I say *his*, because he was neither a Methodist, a Protestant nor a Catholic—not even a Christian; he maintained that a Jew, a Turk, or an Idolater may be as agreeable as any other in the sight of God. For the proof of his doctrine, he relied (strange to say) on the authority of St. Paul, and particularly on this text: *Unus Dominus una fides.* In fact, these were the very words with which he greeted us, the first time we saw him, and which formed the subject of a long valedictory discourse that he delivered in one of the meeting-houses of Westport, previous to his departure for his western mission. By whom was he sent? We have never ascertained. His zeal frequently induced him to dispute with us; it was not difficult to show him that his ideas, with the exception of one, were vague and fluctuating. He acknowledged it himself; but after having wandered from point to point, he always returned to his favorite tenet, which, according to him, was the fundamental principle of all true belief: "that the love of God is the first of duties, and that to inculcate it we must be tolerant." This was his strongest point of support, the foundation of all his reasoning, and the stimulus of his zeal. The term Catholic, according to him, was but another word for "love and philanthropy." He carried his absurdities and contradictions so far that he excited the hilarity of the whole camp. His ingenuous simplicity was even greater than his tolerance. For example, he once said to me: "Yesterday one of the members of my persuasion returned to me a book which I had lent him, stating that it contained an exposition of the Roman creed. When I asked him his opinion of it, he replied, 'that the book was full of errors;' yet it was an exposition of Methodist principles that I had given him. Witness," said he, with emphasis, "the blinding influence of prejudice."

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[6] Bidwell names three — Peyton, Rodgers and Amos E. Frye — from the emigrants.

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[7] "A man named Bartleson, from Jackson county, Missouri. He was not the best man for the position, but we were given to understand that if he was not elected captain he would not go; and as he had seven or eight men with him, and we did not want the party diminished, he was chosen."—*Bidwell.*

I had daily conversations with some one of the caravan, and frequently with several. And although Americans are slow to change their creed, we had the consolation to relieve our traveling companions of a heavy load of prejudice against our holy religion. They parted from us exhibiting signs of respect and veneration; nay, even of preference for Catholicity. These controversies so completely engrossed my mind, my heart and my senses, that I arrived almost unconsciously on the banks of Snake river. Here a great danger and a profitable lesson awaited us; but before speaking of the adventures of our journey, I shall conclude what remains to be related of the country we traversed.

We halted with our narrative upon the shore of the Sweetwater. This stream is one of the most beautiful tributaries of the Platte. It owes its name, indeed, to the purity of its waters.[8] It is distinguished from its fellow tributaries by the numerous wanderings of its current — a proof that the fall of its bed is but slight. But suddenly changing its course, we see or rather hear it rushing impetuously through a long cleft in a chain of mountains. These mountains, which harmonize well with the torrent, exhibit the most picturesque scenes; travelers have named this spot the

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[8] See p. 214.

Devil's Entrance [Devil's Gate, Wyoming]. In my opinion, they should have rather called it Heaven's Avenue, for if it resembles hell on account of the frightful disorder which frowns around it, it is still a mere passage, and it should rather be compared to the way of heaven on account of the scene to which it leads. Imagine, in short, two rows of rocks, rising perpendicularly to a wonderful height, and at the foot of these shapeless walls a winding bed, broken, encumbered with trunks of trees, with rubbish, and with timber of all dimensions; while, in the midst of this chaos of obstacles, the roaring waves force a passage, now rushing with fury, then swelling with majesty, and anon spreading with gentleness, accordingly as they find in their course a wider or more straitened passage. Above these moving and noisy scenes, the eye discerns masses of shadow, here relieved by a glance of day, there deepening in their gloom by the foliage of a cedar or pine, till finally, as the sight travels through the long vista of lofty galleries, it is greeted by a distant perspective of such mild beauty, that a sentiment of placid happiness steals upon the mind. Such is the spectacle we admired at the distance of nine or ten miles from Independence Rock, on the morning of the 6th of July. I doubt whether the solitude of the Carthusian monastery, called La Grande Chartreuse, of which so many wonders are related, can, at least at first sight, offer greater attractions to him whom divine grace has called to a contemplative life. As for me, who am not called to such a state, at least exclusively, after an hour of raptures, I began to understand the expression of the Carthusian friar, *pulchrum transeuntibus;* and I hastened to proceed.

Hence we directed our course more and more toward the heights of the Far West, ascending, sometimes clambering, until we reached the summit, from which we discovered another world. On the 7th of July we were in sight of the immense Oregon Territory. I will not presume to add to the many pompous descriptions which have been given of the spectacle now before us. I shall say nothing either of the height, the number or the variety of those peaks, covered with eternal snows, which rear their heads with menacing aspect to the heavens. Nor will I speak of the many streams descending from them and changing their course with unexpected suddenness; nor of the extreme rarification of the air with the consequent effect upon objects susceptible of contraction, at so great an elevation. All this is common; but to the glory of the Lord, I must commemorate the imperious necessity I experienced of tracing his holy name upon a rock, which towered preeminent amid the grandeur around. May that ever-adorable name be to travelers a monument of our gratitude, and a pledge of salvation!

Henceforth we descended toward the Pacific — first by following, then by crossing the Little and the Big Sandy rivers. In the vicinity of the latter, as the captain had mistaken one road for another, the caravan wandered for three days at random. I myself, on a fine evening, strayed from the rest. I thought myself entirely lost; how was I to act? I did what every sincere believer would have done in the same circumstances, I prayed; and then urging on my horse, I traveled several miles, when it struck me that it would be prudent to retrace my steps. I did so instantly, and it was fortunate, for the caravan was far behind. I found it encamped; still ignorant however of its position, and on a soil so arid that our jaded beasts were necessitated to fast for the night. Days follow, but resemble not each other; two days subsequently, we were surrounded with abundance, filled with joy, all once more united, and on the banks of a river not less celebrated among the hunters of the West than the shores of the Platte. This river loses itself not far below, in clefts of rocks said to be no less than 200 miles in extent, among which there are countless swarms of beavers, although the trapper has never ventured to hunt them, on account of the extreme peril of the enterprise.

At a certain period of the year, both trappers and Indians flock to this spot, for the purpose of bartering all kinds of merchandise. It was here, but eight years ago, the wagons that first undertook to cross the Rocky Mountains found the Pillars of Hercules, and it was here too that we found the messenger of the Flatheads, to whom I have already alluded. This river is the Rio Colorado of the West [Green river]. * * * We rested two days upon its banks, with the company of Captain F[raeb],[9] who had just returned from California. What they told us concerning that distant country dissipated many illusions, and caused some of our companions, who traveled for amusement, to return.

On the 26th of July we seriously thought of continuing our journey. With a train like ours it was no small matter. The remembrance of the Bonneville expedition was still fresh in the minds of all; but our object gave us courage. Although we had with us only such articles as were strictly necessary, they could be transported conveniently only by wagons. We put our confidence in God; the teamsters lashed their mules, the mules did their duty, and presently the river was crossed, and the line of our wagons spread out as best it could, twisting and straying in almost every direction, amid a labyrinth of mountains and valleys, obliged to open a road, now in the bottom of a ravine, now on the slope of a cliff, often through the brush; in one place the mules would have to be unhitched, in another teams must be doubled, and again all hands would be called upon to support the wagons on the inclined edge of an abyss or hold them back in some too rapid descent, to prevent what after all was not always prevented, for how many overturnings did we not behold? Our good Brothers especially, who had become teamsters from necessity much more than from choice; how often were they not astonished at finding themselves, one upon the croup, another on the neck, another among the hoofs, of their mules, without any clear idea of how they had come there, but thanking the God of the traveler that they had gotten off so easily. The same protection covered the horsemen; in the course of the journey, Father Mengarini had six tumbles and Father Point quite as many; once while riding at full gallop my horse fell and I flew over his head, and not one of us in these various occurrences received the least scratch.

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[9] Fraeb (always called Frapp by the trappers) was one of the members of the old Rocky Mountain Fur Company about 1830.

"They came and camped on Green river very soon after our arrival, buying the greater part, if not all, of our alcohol. Years afterward we heard of the fate of that party; they were attacked by Indians the very first night after they left us and several of them killed, including the captain of the trapping party, whose name was Frapp. The whisky was probably the cause."—*Bidwell.*

We traveled in this manner for ten days, to reach Bear river, which flows through a wide and beautiful valley, surrounded by lofty mountains and often intersected by inaccessible rocks.[10] We continued our march through it during eight successive days. The river resembles in its course the form of a horseshoe, and falls into the Great Salt lake, which is about 300 miles in circumference, and has no communication with the sea. On our way, we met several families of Shoshones or Snake Indians, and Soshocos or Root-diggers. They speak the same language, and are both friends to the whites. The only difference we could observe between them was that the latter were by far the poorer. They formed a grotesque group, such as is not to be seen in any other part of the Indian Territory. Represent to yourself a band of wretched horses, disproportionate in all their outlines, loaded with bags and boxes to a height equal to their own, and these surmounted by rational beings young and old, male and female, in a variety of figures and costumes, to which the pencil of a Hogarth or a Breugel could scarcely do justice, and you will have an idea of the scene we witnessed. One of these animals, scarcely four feet high, had for its load four large sacks of dried meat, two on each side, above which were tied several other objects, terminating in a kind of platform on the back of the living beast; and, on the summit of the whole construction, at a dangerous elevation, was seated cross-legged on a bear skin a very old person smoking his calumet. At his side, on another Rozinante, was mounted an old one-eyed Goody, probably his wife, seated in the same manner on the top of sacks and bags, that contained all sorts of roots, dried beans and fruits, grains and berries; in short, all such comestibles as the barren mountains and the beautiful valleys afford. These are carried to their winter encampment. Sometimes we have seen a whole family on the same animal, each according to his age, the children in front, the women next, and the men behind. On two occasions I saw thus mounted five persons, of whom two at least had the appearance of being as able to carry the poor horse as the horse was to support the weight of these two Soshocos gentlemen.

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[10] In his itinerary from the Linton Album, Father De Smet says that his party traveled by way of Brown's Hole. He does not refer to it in his letters, though the time consumed in going from Green river to Bear river would make such a wide detour from the regular route possible. It is doubtful, however, if he went there, for, if he had, the remarkable natural beauty of this valley would not have escaped comment in his letters. This was two years before the founding of Fort Bridger.

Some places on Bear river exhibit great natural curiosities. A square plain of a few acres in extent presents an even surface of fuller's earth of pure whiteness, like that of marble, and resembling a field covered with dazzling snow. Situated near this plain are a great many springs, differing in size and temperature. Several of them have a slight taste of soda, and the temperature of these is cold. The others are of a milk-warm temperature, and must be wholesome; perhaps they are not inferior to the celebrated waters of the Spa, or of the lime springs in Belgium. I am inclined to believe so, though I am not firm in the opinion; at all events, they are surrounded by the mountains over which our wagons found it so difficult to pass. I therefore invite neither sick nor sound to test them. In the same locality there is a remarkable spring, which has made for itself a little mound, of a mixed stony and sulphurous substance, in the shape of an inverted kettle. It has only a small opening in the top, through which one can hardly pass his hand; from this hole issue alternately a jet of water and a gush of steam. The earth for some distance around resounds like an immense vault, and is apt to frighten the solitary traveler as he passes along.

It was here that we left Bear river. On the 14th of August our wagons, having proceeded ten hours without intermission, arrived at the outlet of a defile which seemed to us the end of the world. On our right and left were frightful mountains; in our rear a road which we were by no means tempted to retrace; in front a passage through which rushed a torrent; but so small that the torrent itself seemed with difficulty to force its way. Our beasts of burthen were, for the first time, exhausted. Murmurs arose against the captain, who, however, was imperturbable, and as he never shrank from difficulties, advanced to reconnoitre the ground. In a few moments he made us a sign to approach; one hour after we had surmounted every obstacle, for we had traversed the highest chain of the Rocky Mountains and were nearly in sight of Fort Hall. On the evening previous to the departure of the camp from the Soda Springs, I directed my course toward the fort, to make a few necessary arrangements. The young Francis Xavier was my only companion. We were soon involved in a labyrinth of mountains, and about midnight we were on the summit of the highest chain. My poor guide, being able to see nothing by the weak light of the moon but frightful precipices, was so pitifully embarrassed that after veering about for a while, like a weather-cock, he confessed himself lost. That was not a place, nor was it a time, to wander at random; I therefore took what I considered the only alternative, that of waiting for the morning sun to extricate us from our embarrassment. Wrapped up in my blanket and with my saddle for a pillow, I stretched myself upon the rock, and immediately fell into a sound sleep. Early the next morning we descended by a small cleft in the rocks, which the obscurity of the night had concealed, and arrived on a plain watered by the Portneuf, one of the tributaries of Snake river. We trotted or galloped over fifty miles in the course of the day. The whole way presented evident remains of volcanic eruptions; piles and veins of lava were visible in all directions, and the rocks bore marks of having been in a state of fusion. The river, in its whole length, exhibits a succession of beaver ponds, emptying into each other by a narrow opening in each dike, thus forming a fall of between three and six feet. All these dikes are of stone, evidently the work of the water (the trappers call them the work of the beaver) and of the same character and substance as the stalactites found in some caverns.[11]

We arrived late in the evening, within half a mile of the Fort, [Hall][12] but being unable to see our way in the darkness, and not knowing where we were, we encamped for the night among the bushes, near the margin of a small brook and amid a cloud of mosquitoes.

Beaver Head, Camp of the Big Face, 1st Sept. 1841.

Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:

Nearly four months had elapsed since our departure from Westport, when we met the main body of the nation to which we had been sent.[13] Here we found the principal chiefs, four of whom had advanced a day's journey to welcome us. They met us at one of the sources of the Missouri called Beaver Head, where we had encamped with some Bannocks, of whom I will tell hereafter. Having crossed the small river under the direction of these new guides, we came to an extensive plain, at the western part of which the Flatheads lay encamped. This was on the 30th of August, and it was only toward night that we could distinctly discern the camp. A number of runners who rapidly succeeded each other informed us that the camp was not far distant. Contentment and joy were depicted on their countenances. Long before, the Flathead warrior who is surnamed the Bravest of the Brave sent me his finest horse to Fort Hall, having strongly recommended that no one should mount him before he was presented to me. Soon after the warrior himself appeared, distinguished by his superior skill in horsemanship, and by a large red scarf, which he wore after the fashion of the Marshals of France. He is the handsomest Indian warrior of my acquaintance. He came with a numerous retinue. We proceeded at a brisk trot, and were now but two or three miles from the camp, when at a distance we descried a warrior of lofty stature. A number of voices shouted Paul! Paul! and indeed it was Paul, the head chief, [Big Face] who had just arrived after a long absence, as if by special permission of God, to afford him the satisfaction of introducing me personally to his people. After mutual and very cordial demonstrations of friendship, the good old chief insisted upon returning to announce our arrival. In less than half an hour all hearts were united and moved by the same sentiments. The tribe had the appearance of a flock crowding with eagerness around their shepherd. The mothers offered us their little children, and so moving was the scene that we could scarcely refrain from tears. This evening was certainly one of the happiest of our lives. We could truly say that we had reached the peaceful goal. All previous dangers, toils and trials were at an end and forgotten. The hopeful thought that we would soon behold the happy days of the primitive Christians revive among these Indians, filled our minds, and the main subject of our conversations became the question:

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[11] They do bear a close resemblance to beaver dams, but are built up of mineral deposit. They are easily visible from the railroad trains on the Oregon Short Line.

[12] Fort Hall was built by Nathaniel J. Wyeth in the year 1834 on the left bank of the Snake river, a little above the mouth of the Portneuf. Its history as a trading post is almost entirely associated with the Hudson Bay Company, to whom Wyeth sold it in 1836. It was an exceedingly important point during the emigration period, and later became a military post of considerable note.

[13] Led by Little Chief, Insula, afterward baptized Michael, "on account of his fidelity and courage."

"What shall we do to comply with the requisitions of our signal vocation?"

I engaged Father Point, who is skilled in drawing and architecture, to trace the plan of the missionary stations. In my mind, and still more in my heart, the material was essentially connected with the moral and religious plan. Nothing appeared to us more beautiful than the Narrative of Muratori.[14] We had made it our Vade Mecum. It is chiefly to these subjects that we shall devote our attention for the future, bidding farewell to all fine perspectives, animals, trees and flowers, or favoring them only with an occasional and hasty glance.

From Fort Hall we ascended Snake river, also called Lewis' Fork, as far as the mouth of Henry's Fork. This is unquestionably the most barren of all the mountain deserts. It abounds in absinthe, cactus, and all such plants and herbs as are chiefly found on arid lands. We had to resort to fishing for the support of life, and our beasts of burden were compelled to fast and pine; for scarcely a mouthful of grass could be found during the eight days which it took us to traverse this wilderness. At a distance we beheld the colossal summits of the Rocky Mountains. The Three Tetons were about fifty miles to our right, and to the left we had the Three Buttes at a distance of thirty miles.[15]

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[14] Muratori is the historian of the Jesuit missions in Paraguay, to which frequent references are made throughout the present work. The first South American missions were established in 1610, and in the 150 years in which the missionaries continued their labors a large part of the native population came under their influence. They had nearly a clear field during this time, thanks to laws which made it difficult for strangers to introduce the vices of Europe, and appear to have been building up an exemplary Christian community. The name "réduction" comes from their system, where it was applied to the settled abodes which they induced their wandering neophytes to adopt. The Society was expelled from Paraguay in 1757, and ten years later from all Spanish America, and the entire promising structure fell to the ground.

[15] The Three Buttes have always been notable landmarks on the Snake River plain.

From the mouth of Henry's Fork we steered our course toward the mountains over a sandy plain furrowed by deep ravines, and covered with blocks of granite. We spent a day and night without water. On the following day we came to a small brook, but so arid is this porous soil that its waters are soon lost in the sand. On the third day of this truly fatiguing journey we entered into a beautiful defile, where the verdure was both pleasing and abundant, as it is watered by a copious rivulet. We gave to this passage the name of "the Father's Defile," and to the rivulet that of St. Francis Xavier. From the Father's Defile to the place of our destination the country is well watered, for it abounds with small lakes and rivulets, and is surrounded by mountains, at whose base are found numberless springs. In no part of the world is the water more limpid or pure, for whatever may be the depth of the rivers, the bottom is seen as if there were nothing to intercept the view. The most remarkable spring which we have seen in the mountains is called the Deer Lodge. It is found on the bank of the main fork of the Bitter Root or St. Mary's river; to this fork I have given the name of St. Ignatius.[16] This spring is situated on the top of a mound thirty feet high, in the middle of a marsh. It is accessible on one side only, and is formed of a stony crust deposited by the spring, which has risen as the mound has grown. The water bubbles up on the top, and escapes through a number of openings at the base of the mound, the circumference of which seems to be about sixty feet. The waters at the base are of different temperatures — hot, lukewarm and cold — though but a few steps distant from one another. Some indeed are so hot that meat may be boiled in them. We actually tried the experiment.[17]

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[16] Now called Deer Lodge Creek.

[17] Warm Springs, Deer Lodge county, Montana; now the site of a sanitarium and of the state asylum for the insane.

Hell Gate, 21st Sept., 1841.[18]

"It is on a journey through the desert that we see how attentive Providence is to the wants of man." I repeat with pleasure this remark of my young Protestant friend, because the truth of it appears through the narrative which I have commenced, and will appear still more evidently in what is to follow. Were I to speak of rivers, the account would be long and tedious, for in five days we crossed as many as eighteen, and crossed one of them five times in the space of a few hours. I shall only mention the most dangerous among them. The first which we found it very difficult to cross was the South Fork of the Platte. But as we had been long apprised of the difficulty, we took our precautions beforehand, and some of our Canadians had explored it with so much care that we forded it, not without great difficulty, but without any serious accident. The greatest distress was felt by the dogs of the caravan. Left on the bank when all had crossed, nothing but fidelity toward their masters could have induced them to swim over a river but little less than a mile wide, and having so rapid a current that it would have carried away wagons and carts, had they not been supported on all sides, while the mules exerted all their strength to pull them onward. The poor dogs did not attempt to cross till they found that there was no choice left between encountering the danger and losing their masters. The passage over these rivers is generally effected by means of a bull-boat, the name given to a kind of boat, constructed on the spot with buffalo hides. They are indispensable when the current is impetuous, and no ford can be found. Thanks to our Canadians, we wanted them neither on this nor any other occasion.

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[18] Letter VIII, *Letters and Sketches* and Letter VI, Second Voyage, *Voyages aux Montagues-Rocheuses*, both dated as above and addressed respectively to the Father Provincial and to Father De Smet's sister, Mme. Rosalie van Mosseveldе, Termonde. The English text is followed for the most part.

The second difficult passage was over the North Fork, which is less wide, but deeper and more rapid than the Southern. We had crossed the latter in carts. Having mustered a little more courage, we determined to cross the North Fork on horseback. We were induced to do so, on seeing our hunter drive before him a horse on which his wife was mounted, whilst at the same time he was pulling a colt that carried a little girl but one year old. To hold back under such circumstances would have been a disgrace for Indian missionaries. We therefore resolved to go forward. It is said that we were observed to grow pale, and I am inclined to believe we did; yet, after our horses had for some time battled against the current, we reached the opposite shore in safety, though our clothes were dripping wet. Here we witnessed a scene which, had it been less serious, might have excited laughter. The largest wagon was carried off by the force of the current, in spite of all the efforts, shouts and cries of the men, who did all they could to keep themselves from being drowned. Another wagon was literally turned over. One of the mules showed only his four feet on the surface of the water, and the others went adrift entangled in the gears. On one side appeared the American captain,[19] with extended arms, crying for help. On the other, a young German traveler was seen diving with his beast, and soon after both appearing above water at a distance from each other. Here a horse reached the shore without a rider; further on, two riders appeared on the same horse; finally, the good Brother Joseph dancing up and down with his horse, and Father Mengarini clinging to the neck of his, and looking as if he formed an indivisible part of the animal. After all our difficulties, we found that only one of the mules was drowned. As the mule belonged to a man who had been the foremost in endeavoring to save both men and horses, the members of the caravan agreed to make him a present of a horse, as a reward for his services. We offered thanks to God for our escape from danger.

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[19] Bartleson.

I mentioned before that great dangers awaited us on Snake river. This stream being much less deep and wide than the other two, and having such limpid waters that the bottom can everywhere be seen, could only be dangerous to incautious persons. It sufficed to keep our eyes open, for any obstacle could easily be distinguished and avoided. But whether it were owing to want of thought or attention, or to the stubborn disposition of the team, Brother Charles Huet found himself all at once on the border of a deep precipice, too far advanced to return. Down went mules, driver and vehicle, and so deep was the place that there scarcely appeared any chance to save them. Our hunter, at the risk of his life, threw himself into the river to dive after the poor brother, whom he had to pull out of the carriage. All the Flatheads who were with us tried to save the vehicle, the mules and the baggage. The baggage, with the exception of a few articles, was saved; the carriage was raised by the united efforts of all the Indians, and set afloat; but after this operation it was held by but one of them, who found that his strength was inadequate to the task, and crying that he was being drowned, let go his hold. The hunter plunged in after him, and was himself at the point of losing his life, on account of the efforts which the Indian made to save his own. Finally, after prodigies of valor, exhibited by all the Flatheads, men, women and children, who all strove to give us a proof of their attachment, we lost what we considered the most safe, the team of the carriage. The gears had been cut to enable the mules to reach the shore, but it is said that these animals always perish when once they have had their ears under water. Thus we lost our three finest mules. This loss was to us very considerable, and would have been irreparable, had it not been for the kindness of Captain Ermatinger. Whilst the people of the caravan were drying our baggage, I returned to the fort, where the generous captain repaired our loss for a sum truly inconsiderable, when compared with what must be paid on such occasions to those who wish to avail themselves of the misfortunes of others. We had escaped the danger, and were besides taught a very useful lesson, for it was remarked that it was the first day since we began our journey, on which, by reason of the bustle occasioned by our departure from the fort, we had omitted to say the prayers of the itinerary.

We had dangers of another description to encounter, from which we were also delivered by the aid of God's grace. Once as we traveled along the banks of the Platte, several young members of the caravan separated from the main body, contrary to the express orders of Captain Fitzpatrick,[20] who, together with Father Point and myself, had started a little ahead to look out for a place of encampment. We succeeded in finding a proper site, and we had already unsaddled our horses, when all at once we heard the alarm cry: *Indians! Indians!* And in fact a body of Indians, appearing much larger than it really was, was seen in the distance, first assembling together and then coming full gallop toward our camp. In the mean time a young American, unhorsed and unarmed, makes his appearance, complaining of the loss he had sustained, and indignant at the blows he had received. He seizes the loaded rifle of one of his friends, and rushes forward to take signal vengeance on the offender. The whole camp is roused; the American youth are determined to fight; the colonel, as a man of war, orders the wagons to be drawn up in double file, and places between them whatever may be exposed to plunder. All preparations are made for a regular defense. On the other hand, the Indian squadron, much increased, advances and presents a formidable front.

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[20] Thomas Fitzpatrick, "a prominent member of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, and later much in the service of the Government during the era of exploration. Frequently mentioned in narratives of travel of that period."—*American Fur Trade of the Far West.*

They manœuvre as if they intend to hem in our phalanx, but at sight of our firm position and of the assurance of the captain, who advanced toward them, they checked their march, finally halted, and came to a parley, of which the result was that they should return to the American whatever they had taken from him, but that the blows which he had received should not be returned. After this, both parties united in smoking the calumet. This band consisted of eighty Cheyenne warriors, armed for battle.[21] The Cheyennes are looked upon as the bravest Indians on the prairie. They followed our camp for two or three days. As the chiefs were admitted to our meals, both parties separated with mutual satisfaction.

On another occasion we were in company with the vanguard of the Flatheads, and had penetrated into an impassable defile between the mountains, so that after having traveled the whole day, we were forced to retrace our steps. At night the rumor was spread that a party of Bannock Indians lay encamped in the neighborhood. The Bannocks had this very year killed several white men; but it soon appeared that they were more frightened than ourselves, for before daybreak they had removed from the place.

Without being aware of it, we had escaped a much greater danger on the banks of Green river. We did not know the particulars of this danger till after we had arrived at Fort Hall. There we heard that almost immediately after our separation from the travelers who were on their way to California, and with whom we had till then lived as brothers, they divided themselves into two bands, and each band again subdivided into two parties, one to attend to the chase, the other to guard the horses. The hunter's camp was guarded only by five or six men and some women, who had also to keep watch over the horses and baggage of the others. A booty so rich and so much exposed could not but tempt the Indians who roamed in the neighborhood, and waited, as is their custom, till a seasonable opportunity should offer to commence the attack. When least expected, they fell first upon the horses and then upon the tents, and though the guardians made a courageous defense and sold their lives dearly, yet they burned and pillaged the camp, taking away whatever might be serviceable to them; thus giving a terrible lesson to such as expose themselves to lose all, by not remaining united to withstand the common enemy.[22]

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[21] "There were only forty of them, but they were well mounted on horses, and were evidently a war-party, for they had no women except one, a medicine woman. They came up and camped within a hundred yards of us. When they had put up their lodges Fitzpatrick and John Gray, the old hunter, went out to them and by signs were made to understand that the Indians did not intend to hurt the man or take his mule or gun, but that he was so excited when he saw them that they had to disarm him to keep him from shooting them. They surrendered the mule and the gun, thus showing that they were friendly. They proved to be Cheyenne Indians. Ever afterward that man went by the name of Cheyenne Dawson."— *Bidwell.*

But a few days after we had received this sad intelligence we ourselves were much alarmed. We apprehended lest we should have to defend our lives against a large body of Blackfeet Indians, whose warriors continually infest the country through which we were then traveling. It was reported that they were behind the mountain, and soon after that they were in sight. But our brave Indians, glowing with the desire to introduce us to their tribe, were undaunted, and would have attacked them had they been a hundred times more numerous.

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[22] The massacre of these travelers gave rise to several vague reports. As we had started together it was supposed by many that we had not yet separated when this unfortunate accident took place. Hence it was circulated in the United States, and even in some parts of Europe, that the Catholic Missionaries had all been killed by the Indians.—*Author's Note.*

John Bidwell, a member of this party, contributing to the *Century* of November, 1890, says of the Oregon party, "we heard that the party arrived safely in Oregon." He remained with the California contingent and makes no mention of any trouble with Indians.

Pilchimo, brandishing his musket in the air, started off with the greatest rapidity, and was followed by three or four others. They crossed the mountain and disappeared, and the whole camp made ready to repel the assailants. The horses were hitched and the men under arms, when we saw our brave Indians return over the mountain, followed by a dozen others. The latter were Bannocks, who had united rather with a mind to fly than to attack us. Among them was a chief, who showed the most favorable dispositions. I had a long conference with him on the subject of religion, and he promised that he would use all his endeavors to engage his men to adopt religious sentiments. Both he and his retinue left us the day after the arrival of the Flatheads, who came to wish us joy for the happy issue of our long journey. We here remarked how the power of reason acts upon the heart of the savage. The Bannock chief was brother to an Indian of the tribe who had been killed by one of the Flathead chiefs present on this occasion. They saluted each other in our presence and separated as truly Christian warriors would have done, who show enmity to each other only on the field of battle. Yet as the Flatheads had more than once been basely betrayed by the Bannocks, the former did not offer to smoke the calumet. I hope that we shall have no difficulty to bring on a reconciliation. The Flatheads will undoubtedly follow the advice we shall give them, and I feel confident that the Bannocks will be satisfied with the conditions.

CHAPTER VII.[1]

FOUNDING OF ST. MARY'S MISSION.

Arrival on banks of Bitter Root river and founding of St. Mary's mission — Cœur d'Alène Indians solicit missionaries — Other well-disposed tribes — The problem of the Blackfeet — Prowess of the Flatheads — Their exemplary piety — Plan to make them the nursery for a vast Christian community — Working details — Church and farm buildings — Futile opposition of the devil — Baptisms and marriages — First Blackfoot convert — Father Point goes to the winter hunt.

Bitter Root, the Place selected for the first Reduction, October 18, 1841.

AFTER a journey of four months and a half on horseback through the desert, and in spite of our actual want of bread, wine, sugar, fruit, and all such things as are called the conveniences of life, we find our strength and courage increased, and are better prepared than ever to work at the conversion of the souls that Providence entrusts to our care. Next to the Author of all good things, we returned thanks to her whom the Church reveres as the Mother of her Divine Spouse, since it has pleased the divine goodness to send us the greatest consolations on several days consecrated to her honor. On the feast of her glorious Assumption we met the vanguard of our dear neophytes. On the Sunday within the octave, we, for the first time since my return, celebrated the holy mysteries among them. On the following Sunday our good Indians placed themselves and their children under the Immaculate Heart of Mary, of which we then celebrated the feast. This act of devotion was renewed by the great chief in the name of his whole tribe, on the feast of her Holy Name. On the 24th of September, the feast of our Lady of Mercy, we arrived at the river called Bitter Root, on the banks of which we have chosen the site for our principal missionary station.[2] On the first Sunday of October, feast of the Rosary, we took possession of the promised land, by planting a cross on the spot which we had chosen for our first residence. What motives of encouragement does not the gospel of the present Sunday add to all these mentioned before? Today too we celebrate the Divine Maternity, and what may we not expect from the Virgin Mother who brought forth her Son for the salvation of the world? On the feast of her Patronage we shall offer by her mediation to her Divine Son, twenty-five young Indians, who are to be baptized on that day. So many favors have induced us unanimously to proclaim Mary the protectress of our mission, and give her name to our new residence.[3]

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[1] This chapter consists of Letter IX, *Letters and Sketches,* dated St. Mary's, October 18, 1841, and addressed to the Father Provincial, paralleled by Letter VII, Second Voyage, *Voyages aux Montagnes-Rocheuses,* dated "Bitter Root, place selected for First Reduction," October 26th and addressed to the Theresian Nuns of Termonde; Letters X, *Letters and Sketches,* and VIII, *Voyages aux Montagnes-Rocheuses,* dated St. Mary's, October 26th and addressed respectively to the Provincial and to A Father of the Company of Jesus; Letters XII, *Letters and Sketches,* and XI, *Voyages aux Montagnes-Rocheuses,* dated respectively December 30th and December 31st, and addressed to A Father; and two pages from Book II, *Letters and Sketches.* The English text has mainly been adhered to.

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[2] The site of St. Mary's Mission was on the right bank of the Bitter Root river, about twenty-eight miles above its mouth, between old Fort Owen and the modern town of Stevensville.

[3] *Further history of St. Mary's Mission.*— In the spring of 1850, owing to increasing indifference and estrangement of the Flatheads, Father Mengarini recommended the temporary closing of the mission, and Father Joset repaired thither from St. Paul to make the necessary arrangements. "The improvements were leased to Major John Owen, with the proviso that they should revert to the Fathers, should they return, as was their intention, within a stated time. In the meanwhile everything was to be preserved in the same condition, good order and repair by the lessee." (*Palladino.*) This conveyance was dated November 5, 1850.— It was not practicable, however, to reopen

THE ORIGINAL ST. MARY'S MISSION AMONG THE FLATHEADS.

These remarks may appear silly to such as attribute everything to chance or necessity, but to such as believe in the wise dispensations of the Providence of God, by which all things are governed and directed, all these circumstances, together with the wonderful manner in which we have been called, sent and led to this new mission; and still more the good dispositions manifested by the Indians, will appear very proper motives to inspire us with fresh courage, and with the hope of establishing here, on a small scale, the order and regularity which once distinguished our missions in Paraguay. This hope is not founded on imagination, for whilst I am writing these lines, I hear the joyful voices of the carpenters, re-echoing to the blows on the smith's anvil, and I see them engaged in raising the house of prayer. Besides, three Indians, belonging to the tribe called Cœur d'Alènes, having been informed of our arrival among the Flatheads, have just come to entreat us to have pity on them. "Father," said one of them to me, "we are truly deserving your pity. We wish to serve the Great Spirit, but we know not how. We want some one to teach us. For this reason we make application to you." Oh, had some of my brethren, now so far distant from us, been present here last Sunday, when toward night we raised the august sign of salvation, the standard of the cross, in this small but zealous tribe; how their hearts would have been moved on seeing the pious

the mission for a long time, and in the interval many changes had taken place, among the Indians and in their country. In 1862, Father Giorda succeeded Father Congiato as Superior of the Rocky Mountain Missions, and by 1866 he saw his way clear to the re-establishment of the old mission on the Bitter Root. This was accomplished in September of that year, and among the missionaries who were assigned to the post was Father Ravalli, who was one of the staff who had quitted it sixteen years earlier, and who resided there thenceforth until his death in 1884. The mission was finally closed in 1891, upon the removal to the Jocko reservation of the remnant of the Flatheads, under the chief Charlot.— Father Ravalli's church still stands, and services are occasionally held by a visiting priest from Missoula.

joy of these children of the forest! What sentiments of faith and love did they exhibit on this occasion, when, headed by their chief, they came to kiss the foot of the cross, and then, prostrate on their knees, made a sacred promise, rather to suffer death a thousand times, than to forsake the religion of Jesus Christ! Who knows how many of this chosen band may be destined to become apostles and martyrs of our holy religion! Were we more numerous, I feel confident that many other tribes would become members of the kingdom of God; perhaps more than [illegible],000 might be converted to Christ. The Flatheads and the Cœur d'Alènes, it is true, are not numerous tribes, but they are surrounded by many others who evince the best dispositions.

The Pend d'Oreilles are very numerous, and live at a distance of four or five days' journey from our present establishment. The chief who governed them last year and who has been baptized and called Peter, is a true apostle. In my first visit to them I baptized 250 of their children. Many other tribes have the same origin, and though differing in name, their languages are nearly allied. Next to these are found the Spokans, who would soon follow the example of the neighboring tribes; the Nez Percés, who are disgusted at the conduct of the Protestant ministers that have settled among them; the Snakes, the Crows and the Bannocks whose chief we have seen. Last year I visited the Cheyennes, whom I twice met on the banks of the Platte; the numerous nation of the Sioux, and the three allied tribes called Mandans, Aricaras and Minnetarees, who all have given me so many proofs of respect and friendship; the Omahas, with whom I have had so many conferences on the subject of religion, and many others who seem inclined to embrace the truth.

The Blackfeet are the only Indians of whose salvation we would have reason to despair, if the ways of God were the same as those of man, for they are murderers, thieves, traitors, and all that is wicked. But were not the Chiquitos, the Chiriquans, the Hurons, and the Iroquois equally wicked before their conversion, which required much time and great help from above? And is it not to the last, that, under God, the Flatheads owe their desire of becoming members of his Church, and the first germs of the copious fruit that has been produced among them? What is more, the Blackfeet are not hostile to Black-gowns. We have been assured by other Indians that we would have nothing to fear, if we presented ourselves amongst them as ministers of religion. When last year I fell into the hands of one of their divisions, and it was ascertained that I was an interpreter of the Great Spirit, they carried me in triumph on a buffalo robe to their village, and invited me to a banquet, at which all the great men of the tribe assisted. It was on this occasion, that, whilst I said grace, I was astonished to see that they struck the earth with one hand and raised the other toward heaven, to signify that the earth produces nothing but evil, whilst all that is good comes from above. From all this you will easily conclude that the harvest is great, whilst the laborers are few.

It is the opinion of the missionaries who accompany me, and of the travelers I have seen in the Far West, in short, of all those who have become acquainted with the Flatheads, that they are characterized by the greatest simplicity, docility and uprightness. Yet, to the simplicity of children is joined the courage of heroes. They never begin the attack, but woe to such as provoke them or treat them unjustly. A handful of their warriors will not shrink from an enemy twenty times more numerous than they; they will stand and repel the assault, and at last put them to flight, and make them repent their rashness. Not long before my first arrival among them, seventy men of the tribe, finding themselves forced to come to an engagement with a thousand Blackfeet warriors, determined to sustain the attack, and rather to die than retreat. Before the engagement they prostrated themselves and addressed such prayers as they had learned to the Great Spirit. They rose full of courage, sustained the first shock, and soon rendered the victory doubtful. The fight, with several interruptions, was continued five successive days, till at last the Blackfeet, astounded at the boldness of their antagonists, were panic-struck, and retreated from the scene of action, leaving many killed and wounded on the field of battle, whilst not one warrior of the Flatheads was killed. But one died of the wounds he had received, and his death happened several months after the engagement, on the day succeeding his baptism — (though the point of an arrow had pierced his skull). It was on the same occasion that Pilchimo, whom I have already mentioned, gave remarkable proofs of valor and attachment to his fellow warriors. All the horses were on the point of falling into the enemy's hand. Pilchimo was on foot. Not far off was a squaw on horseback; to see the danger, to take the squaw from her horse and mount it himself, to gallop to the other horses, and bring them together, and drive them into the camp, was the affair of a few minutes. Another warrior, named Sechelmeld, saw a Blackfoot separated from his company, and armed with a musket. The Blackfoot, taking the warrior for one of his own tribe, asked the Flathead to let him mount behind him. The latter, wishing to make himself master of the musket, agreed to the proposal. They advance on the plain, till Sechelmed seeing that the place favored his design, seizes his fellow rider's weapon, exclaiming: "Blackfoot! I am a Flathead, let go your musket." He wrests it from his hands, dispatches him, remounts the horse, and gallops off in pursuit of the enemy.[4]

The following feat equally deserves to be recorded: A Blackfoot warrior was taken and wounded whilst in the act of stealing a horse. The night was dark and the wound had rendered him furious. He held his loaded gun, and threatened death to any one that should approach him.

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[4] This Flathead was Ambrose. A drawing by himself, representing this feat, is among Father De Smet's papers.

Peter, one of the chiefs already mentioned, though diminutive in size, and far advanced in years, felt his courage revived; he runs up to the enemy, and with one blow fells him to the ground. This done he throws himself on his knees, and raising his eyes toward heaven, he is reported to have said: "Great Spirit! thou knowest that I did not kill this Blackfoot from a desire of revenge, but because I was forced to it; be merciful to him in the other world. I forgive him from the bottom of my heart all the evils which he has wished to inflict upon us, and to prove the sincerity of my words I will cover him with my garment." This Peter was baptized last year, and became the apostle of his tribe. Even before baptism, his simplicity and sincerity prompted him to give this testimony of himself: "If ever I have done evil it was through ignorance, for I have always done what I considered good." It would be tedious to give an account of his zealous endeavors. Every morning, at an early hour, he rides through the whole village, stops at every hut, speaks a few words of encouragement and reproof, as circumstances require, and exhorts all to be faithful in the performance of their religious and social duties.

I have spoken of the simplicity and the courage of the Flatheads; I shall make some other remarks concerning their character. They little resemble the majority of the Indians, who are, generally speaking, uncouth, importunate, improvident, insolent, stubborn and cruel.—The Flatheads are disinterested, generous, devoted to their brethren and friends; irreproachable, and even exemplary, as regards probity and morality. Among them, dissensions, quarrels, injuries and enmities are unknown. During my stay in the tribe last year, I have never remarked anything that was contrary to modesty and decorum in the manners and conversation of the men and women. It is true that the children, whilst very young, are entirely without covering, but this is a general custom among the Indians, and seems to have no bad effect upon them; we are determined, however, to abolish this custom as soon as we shall be able to do it.

With respect to religion, the Flatheads are distinguished by the firmness of their faith, and the ardor of their zeal. Not a vestige of their former superstitions can be discovered. Their confidence in us is unlimited. They believe without any difficulty the most profound mysteries of our holy religion, as soon as they are proposed to them, and they do not even suspect that we might be deceived, or even could wish to deceive them. I have already mentioned what exertions they have made to obtain Blackrobes for their tribe; the journeys, undertakings, the dangers incurred, the misfortunes suffered to attain their object. Their conduct during my absence from them has been truly regular and edifying. They attend divine service with the greatest punctuality, and pay the most serious attention to the explanation of the Catechism. What modesty and fervent piety do they not exhibit in their prayers, and with what humble simplicity they speak of their former blindness, and of such things as tend to reflect honor upon their present conduct. On this last subject their simplicity is truly admirable: "Father," some will say, with downcast eyes, "what I tell you now I have never mentioned to any one, nor shall I ever mention it to others; and if I speak of it to you, it is because you wish and have a right to know it."

The chiefs, who might be more properly called the fathers of the tribe, having only to express their will, and are obeyed, are always listened to, and are not less remarkable for their docility in our regard than for the ascendancy they possess over their people. The most influential among them, surnamed "The Little Chief," from the smallness of his stature, whether considered as a Christian or a warrior, might stand a comparison with the most renowned character of ancient chivalry. On one occasion, he sustained the assaults of a whole village, which, contrary to all justice, attacked his people. On another occasion, when the Bannocks had been guilty of the blackest treason, he marched against them with a party of warriors not one-tenth the number of their aggressors. But, under such a leader, his little band believed themselves invincible, and invoking the protection of heaven, rushed upon the enemy, and took signal vengeance of the traitors, killing nine of their number. More would have been killed, had not the voice of Little Chief arrested them in the very heat of the pursuit, announcing that it was the Sabbath, and the hour of prayer. Upon this signal, they gave over the pursuit, and returned to their camp. Arrived there, they immediately, without thinking of dressing their wounds, fell upon their knees in the dust, to render to the Lord of Hosts the honor of the victory. Little Chief had received a ball through the right hand, which had entirely deprived him of its use; but seeing two of his comrades more severely wounded than himself, he with his other hand rendered them every succor in his power, remaining the whole night in attendance upon them. On several other occasions, he acted with equal courage, prudence and humanity, so that his reputation became widely spread.

The Nez Percés, a nation far more numerous than the Flatheads, came to offer him the dignity of being their head chief. He might have accepted it without detriment to the rights of any one, as every Indian is free to leave his chief, and place himself under any other head he may think proper, and, of course, to accept any higher grade that may be offered to him. But Little Chief, content with the post assigned him by Providence, refused the offer, however honorable to him, with this simple remark, "By the will of the Great Master of Life I was born among the Flatheads, and if such be his will, among the Flatheads I am determined to die;"—a patriotic feeling, highly honorable to him. As a warrior, still more honorable to his character are the mildness and humility manifested by him. He said to me once: "Till we came to know the true

God, alas, how blinded were we! We prayed, it is true — but to whom did we address our prayers? In truth, I know not how the Great Spirit could have borne with us so long." At present his zeal is most exemplary; not content with being the foremost in all the offices at chapel, he is always the first and last at the family prayers, and even before break of day he is heard singing the praises of his Maker. His characteristic trait is mildness; and yet he can assume due firmness, not to say severity of manner, when he sees it necessary to exercise more rigorous discipline. Some days before our arrival, one of the young women had absented herself from prayer, without a sufficient reason. He sent for her, and after reading her a lecture before all the household, enforced his motives for greater attention in future, by a smart application of the cane. And how did the young offender receive the correction? With the most humble and praiseworthy submission.

The Flatheads are fond of praying. After the regular evening prayer, they will assemble in their tents to pray or sing canticles. These pious exercises will frequently be prolonged till a late hour; and if any wake during the night, they begin to pray. Before making his prayer, the good old Simeon gets up and rakes out the live coals upon his hearth, and when his prayer is done, which is always preceded and followed by the sign of the cross, he smokes his calumet and then turns in again. This he will do three or four times during the night. There was a time, also, when these more watchful spirits of the household, not content with praying themselves, would awaken the sleepers, anxious to make them partakers of the good work. These pious excesses had sprung from a little piece of advice I had given them on my first visit, that "on waking at night it was commendable to raise the heart to God." It has since been explained to them how they are to understand the advice. This night, between the 25th and 26th, the prayers and canticles have not ceased. Yesterday, a young woman having died who had received baptism four days previously, we recommended them to pray for the repose of her soul. Her remains were deposited at the foot of the Calvary, erected in the midst of the camp. On the cross upon her grave might confidently be inscribed the words: *In spem Resurrectionis* — In hope of a glorious Resurrection. We shall shortly have to celebrate the commemoration of the faithful departed; this will afford us an opportunity of establishing the very Christian and standing custom of praying for the dead in their place of interment.

On Sundays, the exercises of devotion are longer and more numerous, and yet they are never fatigued with the pious duty. They feel that the happiness of the little and of the humble is to speak with their Heavenly Father, and that no house presents so many attractions as the house of the Lord. Indeed, so religiously is the Sunday observed here, that on this day of rest, even before our coming, the most timorous deer might wander unmolested in the midst of the tribe, even though they were reduced by want of provisions to the most rigorous fast. For, in the eyes of this people, to use the bow and arrow on this day, would not have appeared less culpable than did the gathering of wood to the scrupulous fidelity of the people of God. Since they have conceived a juster idea of the law of grace, they are less slaves to "the letter that killeth;" but still desirous to be faithful to the very letter, they are studious to do their best, and when any doubt arises, they hasten to be enlightened thereon, soliciting in a spirit of faith and humility that permission of which they may think themselves to stand in need.

The principal chief is named "Big Face," on account of the somewhat elongated form of his visage; he might more nobly and more appropriately be named the Nestor of the Desert, for as well in years as in stature and sagacity he has all the essentials of greatness. From his earliest infancy, nay, even before he could know his parents, he had been the child of distress. Being left a helpless orphan, by the death of his mother, with no one to protect him, it was proposed to bury him with her in the same grave — a circumstance that may serve to give some idea of the ignorance and brutality of his tribe. But the Almighty, who had other purposes in his regard, moved the heart of a young woman to compassionate his helpless condition, and offer to become a mother to him. Her humanity was abundantly recompensed by seeing her adopted son distinguished above all his fellows by intelligence, gentleness, and every good disposition. He was grateful, docile, charitable, and naturally so disposed to piety, that, from a want of knowing the true God, he more than once was led to place his trust in that which was but the work of his own hands. Being one day lost in a forest, and reduced to extremity, he began to embrace the trunk of a fallen tree, and to conjure it to have pity upon him. Nor is it above two months since a serious loss befel him; indeed one of the most serious that could happen to an Indian — the loss of three calumets at the same time. He spent no time in retracing his steps, and to interest heaven in his favor, he put up the following prayer: "O Great Spirit, you who see all things and undo all things, grant, I entreat you, that I may find what I am looking for; and yet let thy will be done." This prayer should have been addressed to God. He did not find the calumets, but in their place he received what was of more incomparable value — simplicity, piety, wisdom, patience, courage and cool intrepidity in the hour of danger. More favored in one respect than Moses, this new guide of another people to God, after a longer sojourn in the wilderness, was at length successful in introducing his children into the land of promise. He was the first of his tribe who received baptism, and took the name of Paul, and like his patron, the great Apostle, he has labored assiduously to gain over his numerous children to the friendship and love of his Lord and Master.

St. Mary's, Rocky Mountains, 26th Oct., 1841.

Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:

This last letter will contain the practical conclusions of what has been stated in the preceding. I am confident that these conclusions will be very agreeable and consoling to all persons who feel interested in the progress of our holy religion, and who very prudently refuse to form a decided opinion, unless they can found it on well attested facts.

From what has hitherto been said, we may draw this conclusion, that the nation of the Flatheads appear to be a chosen people—"the elect of God;" that it would be easy to make this tribe a model for other tribes,—the seed of 200,000 Christians, who would be as fervent as were the converted Indians of Paraguay; and that the conversion of the former would be effected with more facility than that of the latter. The Flatheads have no communication with corrupt tribes; they hold all sects in aversion; they have a horror of idolatry; they cherish much sympathy for the whites, but chiefly for the Black-robes (Catholic priests), a name, which, in consequence of the prepossessions and favorable impressions, which they have received from the Iroquois, is synonymous with goodness, learning, and catholicity. Their position is central; their territory sufficiently extensive to contain several missions; the land is fertile, and the country surrounded by high mountains. They are independent of all authority except that of God, and those who represent him. They have no tribute to pay but that of prayer; they have already acquired practical experience of the advantages of a civilized over a barbarous state of life; and in fine, they are fully convinced and firmly persuaded that without the religion that is announced to them, they can be happy neither in this world nor in the next.

From all these considerations, we may again draw the conclusions, that the best end which we can propose to ourselves is that which our Fathers of Paraguay had in view when they commenced their missionary labors; and that the means to attain this end should be the same, chiefly because these means have been approved by the most respectable authorities, crowned with perfect success, and admired even by the enemies of our religion.

The principle being admitted, it only remains to form a correct idea of the method employed by our Fathers in Paraguay to improve the minds and hearts of their neophytes, and to bring them to that degree of perfection of which they conceived them susceptible. After having seriously reflected on what Muratori relates of the establishments in Paraguay, we have concluded that the following points should be laid down, as rules to direct the conduct of our converts.

1. *With regard to God.*— Simple, firm, and lively faith with respect to all the truths of religion, and chiefly such as are to be believed as theologians express it, *necessitate medii et necessitate præcepti*. Profound respect for the only true religion; perfect submission to the Church of God, in all that regards faith and morality, discipline, etc. Tender and solid piety toward the Blessed Virgin and the saints. Desire of the conversion of others. Courage and fortitude of the martyrs.

2. *With regard to our neighbor.*— Respect for those in authority, for parents, the aged, etc. Justice, charity, and generosity toward all.

3. *With regard to one's self.*— Humility, modesty, meekness, discretion, temperance, irreproachable behavior, industry or love of labor, etc.

We shall strenuously recommend the desire of the conversion of others, because Providence seems to have great designs with respect to our small tribe. In one of our instructions given in a little chapel, constructed of boughs, not less than twenty-four nations were represented, including ourselves. Next, the courage and fortitude of the martyrs, because in the neighborhood of the Blackfeet there is continual danger of losing either the life of the soul, or that of the body. Also, industry or the love of labor, because idleness is the predominant vice of Indians; and even the Flatheads, if they are not addicted to idleness, at least manifest a striking inaptitude to manual labor, and it will be absolutely necessary to conquer this. To ensure success, much time and patience will be required. Finally and chiefly, profound respect for the true religion, to counteract the manœuvres of various sectaries, who desirous as it would seem, to wipe away the reproach formerly made by Muratori, and in our days by the celebrated Doctor Wiseman, use all their efforts to make proselytes, and to appear disinterested, and even zealous in the propagation of their errors.

4. *With regard to the means.*— Flight from all contaminating influence; not only from the corruption of the age, but from what the gospel calls the world. Caution against all immediate intercourse with the whites, even with the workmen, whom necessity compels us to employ, for though these are not wicked, still they are far from possessing the qualities necessary to serve as models to men who are humble enough to think they are more or less perfect, in proportion as their conduct corresponds with that of the whites. We shall confine them to the knowledge of their own language, erect schools among them, and teach them reading, writing, arithmetic and singing. Should any exception be made to this general rule, it will be in favor of a small number, and only when their good dispositions will induce us to hope that we may employ them as auxiliaries in religion. A more extensive course of instruction would undoubtedly prove prejudicial to these good Indians, whose simplicity is such that they might easily be imposed upon, if they were to come in contact with error, whilst it is the source of all truth and virtue when enlightened by the flambeau of faith. La Harpe himself, speaking of the apostolic laborers of our Society, says that the perfection of our ministry consists in illumining by faith the ignorance of the savage.

To facilitate the attainment of the end in view, we have chosen the place of the first missionary station, formed the plan of the village, made a division of the lands, determined the form of the various buildings, etc. The buildings deemed most necessary and useful at present are a church, schools, workhouses, storehouses, etc. Next, we have made regulations respecting public worship, religious exercises, instructions, catechisms, confraternities, the administration of the sacraments, singing, music, etc. All this is to be executed in conformity with the plan formerly adopted in the missions of Paraguay.

Such are the resolutions which we have adopted, and which we submit to be approved, amended or modified, by those who have the greater glory of God at heart, and who, by their position and the graces of their state of life, are designed by the Most High to communicate to us the true spirit of our Society.

St. Mary's, Dec. 30, 1841.

Reverend Father:

I have given you the happy and consoling result of my journey in November. Before the close of the year I have yet to make you acquainted with what has passed during my absence, and since my return, among the Flatheads; all goes to prove what I have advanced in my preceding letters.

The Reverend Fathers Mengarini and Point were not idle during my absence. The following will give you some idea of the state of affairs on my return, both in regard to material and spiritual matters, as well as the practices and usages established, which could not but tend to strengthen, more and more, our good neophytes.

The plan mentioned in my letters, and unanimously approved, and which we were urged to carry into execution, was, to commence with what appeared to be the most urgent.

We enclosed the field destined to become God's portion of the settlement. We started the buildings intended to be hereafter dependencies of the farm, but serving temporarily for a church and residence, on account of the approach of winter, and our wish to unite the whole colony. These works were indispensable, and were carried on with such spirit that in the space of a month the new buildings could shelter from 400 to 500 souls.

The Flatheads, assisting us with their whole heart and strength, had, in a short time, cut from 2,000 to 3,000 stakes; and the three Brothers, with no other tools than the axe, saw and auger, constructed a chapel with pediment, colonnade and gallery, balustrade, choir, seats, etc., by St. Martin's day; when they assembled in the little chapel all the catechumens, and continued the instructions which were to end on the 3d of December, the day fixed for their baptism. In the interval between these two remarkable epochs, there was on each day one instruction more than usual. This last instruction, intended chiefly for grown persons, was given at eight o'clock in the evening and lasted about an hour and a quarter. These good savages, whose ears and hearts are alike open when the word of God is addressed to them, appeared still better disposed in the evening; the silence being unbroken by the cries of infants or children. Our Heavenly Father so graciously heard their prayers, that on St. Francis Xavier's day the good Fathers had the consolation of baptizing 202 adults.

So many souls wrested from the demons was more than enough to excite their rage,— seeds of distrust, hindrances occasioned by the best intentioned, the sickness of the interpreter and sexton, at the very moment their assistance was most required; a kind of hurricane, which took place the evening before the baptism, and which overturned three lodges in the camp, the trees torn from their roots, and everything in appearance about to be uprooted, even to the foundations of the church — the organ unintentionally broken by the savages, on the eve of being applied to so beautiful a purpose — all seemed to conspire against them; but the day for baptism arrives, and every cloud disappears.

The Fathers had intended to solemnize the marriages of the husbands and wives on the same day as their baptism. They had even announced that the ceremony would take place after baptism; but the sacred rite having occupied a much longer time than they supposed, on account of the necessity of interpreting all that was said, they were obliged to defer this sacrament until the next day, trusting to God and the new Christians for the preservation of their baptismal innocence.

As our former missionaries have left nothing in writing on the conduct we should observe with regard to marriage, it may, perhaps, be useful to relate here what has been our course, in order that our conduct may be rectified if it has not been judicious.

We hold the principle that, generally speaking, there are no valid marriages among the savages of these countries; and for this reason, we have not found one, even among the best disposed, who, after marriage had been contracted in their own fashion, did not believe himself justified in sending away his first wife, whenever he thought fit, and taking another. Many even have several wives in the same lodge. It is, however, true, that many when entering the marriage state promise that nothing but death will ever separate them; that they will never give their hand to another. But what impassioned man or woman has not said as much? Can we infer from this that the contract is valid, when it is universally received that even after such promises they have not the less right to do as they please, when they become disgusted with each other? We are then agreed on this principle, that among them, even to the present time, there has been no marriage, because they have never known well in what its essence and obligation consisted. To adopt an opposite view would be to involve one's self in a labyrinth of difficulties, from which it would be very difficult to escape. This was, if I am not mistaken, the conduct of St. Francis Xavier in the Indies, since it is said in his *Life* that he praised before the married those whom he supposed to be dearest to them, that they might be more easily induced to keep to one alone. Secondly, supposing then that there were material faults in their marriages, the necessity of a renewal was not spoken of but for the time which followed baptism, and this took place the day following that happy occasion.

After the Fathers had gained the necessary information respecting the degrees of relationship, and had given the necessary dispensations, the marriage ceremony, preceded by a short instruction, was performed, and contributed greatly to give the people a high idea of our holy religion.

The twenty-four marriages then contracted presented that mixture of simplicity, of respectful affection and profound joy, which are the sure indications of a good conscience. There were among the couples good old men and women; but their presence only rendered the ceremony more respectable in the eyes of those assembled; for among the Flatheads all that relates to religion is sacred; unhappy he who would so express himself before them as to lead them to believe that he thought otherwise. They left the chapel, their hearts filled with sentiments purified by that grace which constitutes the charm of every state of life, and especially of those in wedlock.

The only thing that appeared strange to them was when the Fathers spoke of taking the names of witnesses; but when they were told that this was only done because the church so ordained, to give more authority and dignity to the marriage contract, they no longer saw in it anything but what was reasonable, and the question was, who should be witness for the others?

The same astonishment was manifested with regard to godfathers. The interpreter had translated the word godfather, a term which is not in their language, by second father. The poor savages not knowing what this meant, or what consequences this title would imply, were not eager to make a choice. To be a godfather moreover offered no great attraction. As soon as we made them understand it, their difficulties vanished, and the more easily; for not to multiply spiritual affinities, a godfather only was given to the men, and a godmother to the women; and as to the obligations attached to the honor of being sponsors, they were much less here than elsewhere, the Black-robes promising to take upon themselves the greatest part of the burden. For the first baptisms our choice of sponsors was very limited; only thirteen grown persons were qualified to act in this capacity — but the most aged persons being baptized before the others, they, without laying aside the lighted candle, (the symbol of faith) were chosen for the second division; and so in like manner with the rest.

The day preceding the baptism, the Fathers, on account of their labors, were only able to collect the colony twice; besides Father Mengarini was indisposed. In the evening, however, he assembled the people, and great was their astonishment on beholding the decorations of the chapel. Some days previously the Fathers had engaged all who were willing, to make mats of rushes or straws. All the women, girls and children assembled eagerly for this good work, so that they had enough to cover the floor and ceiling and hang around the walls. These mats, ornamented with festoons of green, made a pretty drapery around the altar. On a canopy was inscribed the holy name of Jesus. Among the ornaments they placed a picture of the Blessed Virgin over the tabernacle; on the door of the tabernacle a representation of the heart of Jesus. The pictures of the way of the cross, in red frames; the lights, the silence of night, the approach of the important day, the calm after the hurricane, which had burst on them only a few moments before — all these circumstances united had, with the grace of God, so well disposed the minds and hearts of our Indians, that it would have been scarcely possible to find on earth an assembly of savages more resembling a company of saints.

This was the beautiful bouquet which the Fathers were permitted to present to Saint Francis Xavier. The next day they were engaged from eight o'clock in the morning until half-past ten at night, in the church, excepting only one hour and a half, which they gave to repose. The following was the order followed. First, they baptized the chiefs and married men. These were chosen as godfathers for the young men and little boys; then the married women, whose husbands were living with them; afterward the widows and wives who had been cast off; and lastly the young women and girls.

It was gratifying to hear with what intelligence these good savages replied to all the questions addressed to them, and to see them praying at the moment of receiving baptism. At the end, each received a taper whose blended light beautifully illuminated our humble chapel.

But let us come to something still more edifying. I shall not speak of their assiduous attendance at the instructions — of their eagerness to hear our words — of the evident profit they received from them; all this is common in the course of a mission; but rarely do we witness the heroic sacrifices which these Indians have made. Many who had two wives have retained her whose children were most numerous, and with all possible respect dismissed the other. One evening, a savage came to seek the Fathers at the lodge, which was filled with Indians, and unabashed by any merely human consideration, asked what he should do in his present circumstances? On the instant he acted according to the instructions given him; he dismissed his youngest wife, giving her what he would have wished another to give to his sister, if in the same situation, and was reunited to his first wife, whom he had forsaken. After an instruction, a young woman, asking to speak, said that "she desired very much to receive baptism, but that she had been so wicked she dared not make the request." Each one would have made a public confession. A great number of young mothers, married according to the mode of the savages, but abandoned by their husbands, who were of some other tribe, renounced them most willingly, to have the happiness of being baptized.

The ordinary regulations observed in the village are as follows: When the Angelus rings, the Indians rise from sleep; half an hour after, the morning prayers are said in common; all assist at mass and at the instruction. A second instruction is given at evening, toward sunset, and lasts about an hour and a quarter. At two o'clock in the afternoon we have the regular catechism for the children, at which grown persons may assist if they think proper. The children are formed into two divisions: the first is composed exclusively of those who know the first prayers; the second of the smaller children. One of the Fathers each morning visits the sick, to furnish them with medicines, and give them such assistance as their wants may require.

We have adopted the system of instruction and bestowing rewards, in usage in the schools of the brothers of the Christian doctrine. During catechism, which lasts about an hour, we have recitations and explanations, intermingled with canticles. Every day, for each good answer, tickets of approbation are given; one or more, according to the difficulty of the question proposed. Experience has proved that these tickets given at once, are less embarrassing than when we mark their names on a list; the former plan takes less time, and interests the children more, rendering them, besides, more assiduous and careful. These tickets serve, at the same time, as certificates of attendance at catechism, and as tokens of intelligence and good will, they please the parent not less than their children. The former are incited to make their children repeat what has been said at catechism, to render them capable of answering better the following day; and also with a desire of improving themselves. The wish to see their children distinguish themselves, has attracted almost the whole colony to catechism; none of the chiefs who have children fail to be there; and there is not less emulation among the parents than among the children themselves. A still greater value is attached to the tickets, from the exactitude and justice with which the deserving are rewarded. They who have obtained good tickets during the week, are rewarded on Sunday with crosses, medals, or ribbons, publicly distributed. On the first Sunday of every month they distribute to those who have received the most good tickets in the course of the month, medals or pictures, which become their private property. These pictures, preserved with care, are great stimulants, not only to the study of their catechism but also to the practice of piety. They are monuments of victory, examples of virtue, exhortations to piety, and models of perfection. Their rarity, and the efforts necessary to obtain them, also enhance their worth. As we desire to inspire the savages, who are naturally inclined to idleness, with a love for work, it has been judged suitable to reward their little efforts in the same manner as we recompense their improvement in, and knowledge of their catechism.

To maintain order, and promote emulation among them, the catechism children are divided into seven or eight sections, of six each; the boys on one side, the girls on the other. At the head of each section there is a chief, who must assist the children placed under him to learn their catechism; that thus every child may indulge the hope of meriting a reward at the end of the week or month. They are so divided that the competitors, to the number of five or six in each section, may be of nearly equal capacity.

Father Point, who was, immediately after Christmas, to accompany the assembled camps of Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles, Nez Percés, etc., prepared for his new campaign by a retreat of eight days. Twenty-four marriages, as I have already said, had been celebrated during my absence, and 202 adults, with little boys and girls from eight to fourteen years of age, had been baptized. There were still thirty-four couples, who awaited my return to receive the sacraments of baptism and marriage, or to renew their marriage vows. The Nez Percés had not yet presented their children for baptism. There was an old chief of the Blackfeet nation, in the camp, with his son and his little family, five in all, who had been hitherto very assiduous in their attendance at prayers and catechism. The day succeeding my arrival I commenced giving three instructions daily, besides the catechism, which was taught by the other Fathers. They profited so well that, with the grace of God, 115 Flatheads, with three chiefs at their head, thirty Nez Percés with their chief, and the Blackfoot chief and his family, presented themselves at the baptismal font on Christmas day. I began my masses at seven o'clock in the morning; at five o'clock P. M. I still found myself in the chapel. The heart can conceive, but the tongue cannot express the emotions which such a consoling spectacle may well awaken. The following day I celebrated a solemn mass of thanksgiving for the signal favors with which our Lord had deigned to visit his people. From six to seven hundred new Christians, with bands of little children, baptized in the past year — all assembled in a poor little chapel, covered with rushes — in the midst of a desert, where but lately the name of God was scarcely known; offering to the Creator their regenerated hearts, protesting that they would persevere in his holy service even to death, was an offering, without doubt, most agreeable to God, and which, we trust, will draw down the dews of heaven upon the Flathead nation and the neighboring tribes.

On the 29th the large camp, accompanied by the Fathers, left us for the great buffalo hunt, and joined the Pend d'Oreilles, who awaited them at two days' journey hence; there will be above 200 lodges. I am filled with hope for the success and fresh victories, with which, I trust, God will deign to reward the zeal of his servant. In the meantime we occupy ourselves (Father Mengarini and myself) in translating the catechism into the Flathead tongue; and in preparing 150 persons for their first communion.

Our good Brothers and the Canadians are engaged at the same time in erecting around our establishment a strong palisade, fortified with bastions, to shelter us from the incursions of the Blackfeet, whom we daily expect to visit us. Our confidence in God is not weakened; we take the precautions which prudence dictates, and remain without fear at our post.

A young Sinpoil[6] has just arrived in our camp, and these are his words: "I am a Sinpoil, my nation is compassionate. I have been sent to hear your words, and learn the prayer you teach the Flatheads. The Sinpoils desire also to know it, and to imitate their example." This young man proposes to pass the winter in our camp, and return in the spring to his own nation, to sow among them the seeds of the gospel.

The whole Flathead nation converted — 400 Kalispels baptized — eighty Nez Percés, seven Cœurs d'Alène, many Kootenais, Blackfeet, Snakes and Bannocks — the Sinpoils, the Chaudières, who open their arms to us, and eagerly ask for Fathers to instruct them; the earnest demands from Fort Vancouver on the part of the Governor [Doctor McLoughlin], and of the Reverend Mr. Blanchet, assuring us of the good desires and dispositions of a great number of nations, ready to receive the gospel — in a word, a vast country, which only awaits the arrival of true ministers of God, to rally round the standard of the cross — behold the beautiful bouquet, Reverend Father, which we have the happiness of presenting you at the close of 1841. It is at the foot of the crucifix that you are accustomed to ask counsel of heaven for the welfare of the nations entrusted to your children. Our number is very far from sufficient for the pressing and real wants of this people. The Protestants are on the *qui vive*. Send us then some Fathers and Brothers to assist us, and thousands of souls will bless you at the throne of God for all eternity.

[6] A tribe of the Salishan family is evidently meant, whose name is commonly spelled Cinq Poils or Sans Puells — both French transliterations of a native name.

Madison Fork, August 15, 1842.

Reverend and Dear Father:

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Our only building as yet was a wooden house, without a roof, and the winter had already set in. We began by recommending our wants to God, and with God's assistance we found ourselves, on St. Martin's day, in possession of a temporary chapel, large enough to contain all the colony, with about 100 of the Nez Percés tribe, whom curiosity had attracted to the neighborhood. Since that period they have been so careful in avoiding sin, so exact in attending our instructions, and the fruit of the divine word has been so visible in our settlement that on the 3d of December 202 catechumens were ranged in our chapel, waiting for baptism. This was too beautiful an offering to St. Francis Xavier, apostle of the Indians, not to excite the fury of man's great enemy. Accordingly, for a few days previously we encountered multiplied trials. To speak only of the most visible, the prefect, interpreter and sexton fell sick. The very eve of the great day the environs were laid waste by a sort of hurricane — the church windows were broken, large trees were rooted up, and three huts were thrown down; but these obstacles, far from prejudicing the triumph of religion, served only to render it still more striking.

The catechumens having assembled in the chapel, which had been adorned with its most beautiful ornaments, and where they had been conducted for the more immediate preparations of their hearts prior to receiving the great sacrament of baptism, were so struck by the imposing appearance of the chapel and the melodious sounds of the organ, now heard for the first time in the wilderness, that they were not able to express their admiration. The next day, with the exception of the time the Fathers took for their dinner, they were in church from eight o'clock in the morning until half-past ten in the evening. How delightful it was to listen to the intelligent answers of the good savages to all the questions proposed to them. Never will those who were present forget the pious spirit of their replies. The rehabilitations of their marriages succeeded baptism, but not without great sacrifices on their part, because until that time the poor Indians had been ignorant of the unity and indissolubility of the conjugal tie. We could not help admiring the mighty effects of the sacrament of baptism in their souls. One poor husband hesitated as to which of his wives he should select. The oldest of them, perceiving his irresolution, said to him: "You know how much I love you, and I am also certain that you love me, but you cherish another more; she is younger than I am. Well, remain with her; leave me our children, and in that manner we can all be baptized." I could cite many such traits.

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CHAPTER VIII.[1]

JOURNEY TO FORT COLVILLE AND RETURN.

Autumn of 1841.

Need of provisions and seeds — Start for Fort Colville — Hell Gate — Animals of the country — The ingenious carcajou — Meetings with Indians — Kalispels raising potatoes — Scenery and dangers of Clark's Fork — Large timber — Lake Pend d'Oreille — Arrival at Colville — Hospitality of Macdonald — Return journey — Adam and Eve and the buffalo fat — Hell unchained among the Kalispels — Sixty baptisms.

I HAVE just finished a little journey to Fort Colville on the Columbia river, about 320 miles from our establishment. Although the season was far advanced, two reasons determined me to make the journey: First, we had to have provisions for the winter; seeds for the coming spring; tools for the Indians so well disposed to work; cattle, and in short whatever the establishment of our first réduction required: second, my desire to visit the Pend d'Oreilles who generally spend the autumn upon Clark's Fork.

On the eve of my departure I informed the Flatheads of my intentions. I requested them to procure some horses, and a small escort, in case I should meet with any of their enemies, the Blackfeet. They brought to me seventeen horses, the number I had asked them; and ten young and brave warriors, who had already been often pierced with balls and arrows in different skirmishes, presented themselves to accompany me on my journey. With pleasure I bear testimony to their devotedness, their childlike simplicity and docility, politeness, complaisance and rare hilarity; but, above all, to their exemplary piety. These good Flatheads endeavored in every manner to divine and anticipate all my wants.

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[1] This chapter comprises a portion of Book II, *Letters and Sketches*, purporting to have been written at the Madison Forks, August 15, 1842, and Letter IX, Second Voyage, *Voyages aux Montagnes-Rocheuses*, dated St. Mary's, December 28, 1841, and addressed "To A Father of the Company of Jesus." The two are parallel, but the French narrative contains additional matter, here translated for the first time. Aside from this, the English text is followed.

On the afternoon of the 28th of October, as I have already said, we commenced our march, and made about forty miles down the valley of the Bitter Root. That day we met no one but a solitary hunter, who was carrying a buck, the half of which he offered to us with great eagerness. This furnished us with an excellent supper, and a good breakfast for the next morning. The 29th, snow fell in large flakes, notwithstanding which we continued our march. We crossed, in the course of the day, a fine stream, without a name [Lolo Fork] — the same one which the famous travelers, Lewis and Clark, ascended in 1805, on their way to the section of country occupied by the tribe of the Nez Percés. I will call it the river of St. Francis Borgia. Six miles further south we crossed the beautiful river of St. Ignatius [Hell Gate]. It enters the plain of the Bitter Root — which we shall henceforward call St. Mary's — by a beautiful defile, commonly called, by the mountaineers or Canadian hunters, the Hell Gate; for what reason, however, I know not. These gentlemen have frequently on their lips the words devil and hell; and it is perhaps on this account that we heard so often these appellations. Be not then alarmed when I tell you that I examined the Devil's pass, went through the Devil's gate, rowed on Satan's stream, and jumped from the Devil's horns. The "rake,"[3] one of the passes, the horns, and the stream, really deserve names that express something horrible — all three are exceedingly dangerous. The first and second, on the Missouri, on account of the innumerable snags which fill their beds, as there are entire forests swallowed up by the river. The third pass of which I spoke, adds to the difficulties of the others a current still stronger. A canoe launched into this torrent flies over it with the speed of an arrow, and the most experienced pilot trembles in spite of himself. Twice did the brave Iroquois, who conducted our light canoe, exclaim: "Father, we are lost;" but a loud cry of "Courage — take courage, John, confide in God, keep steady to the oar," saved us in that dangerous stream, drew us out from between the horns and threatening teeth of this awful "rake."

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[3] See *ante*, p. 153.

But let us return to our account of the journey to Colville. We spread our skins on the borders of a little river at the foot of a high mountain, which we were to cross the next day, having traversed St. Mary's valley, a distance of about forty miles. This valley is from four to seven miles wide, and above 200 long. It has but one fine defile, already mentioned, and which serves as the entrance to, and issue from, the valley. The mountains which terminate it on both sides appear to be inaccessible; they are piles of jagged rocks, the base of which presents nothing but fragments of the same description, while the Norwegian pine grows on those that are covered with earth, giving them a very sombre appearance, particularly in the autumn, in which season the snow begins to fall. They abound in bucks, buffalo and sheep, whose wool is as white as snow and as fine as silk; also in all kinds of bears, wolves, panthers and carcajoux (an animal with short paws, some four feet long and remarkably powerful; when he has killed his prey, deer, antelope or bighorn, he tears off a piece of skin big enough to stick his head through after the fashion of a hood, and thus drags it off whole to his den). There are also found tiger cats, wild cats and whistlers, a species of mountain rat. The moose is found here, but is very seldom caught, on account of its extraordinary vigilance, for on the slightest rustling of a branch it leaves off eating, and will not return to its food for a long time afterward.

The soil of the valley is, with some few exceptions, very light; it contains, however, some good pastures. The whole course of the river is well lined with trees; especially with the pine, the fir, cottonwood and willow trees.

Amongst the most remarkable birds we distinguished the Nun's eagle (so called by travelers on account of the color of its head, which is white, whilst the other parts of the body are black), the black eagle, buzzard, waterfowl, heron. crane, pheasant and quail.

The 30th, three horses were found to have strayed off while grazing freely during the night (a liberty which they rarely abuse) and we could not start until eleven o'clock in the morning. We then ascended a gap in the mountain. The two sides were very lofty and studded with large pines, all the branches of which were covered with a black and very fine moss, that hung in festoons, or in the shape of mourning garlands, and added to the already funereal appearance of this pass. We here filed off by a little path, scarce worthy, however, of the name, for a distance of six miles. The road was filled with large blocks of stone and trunks of trees, placed as if on purpose to render the pass difficult and impracticable. The summit once attained, we proceeded to cross a smiling little plain, called the Camas Prairies, where the Flatheads come every spring to dig up that nourishing root, which, together with the game they are able to procure, forms their chief nourishment. We very soon descended the mountain in a zigzag direction, and reached a beautiful plain, which is watered by two rivers, the St. Aloysius and St. Stanislaus. They unite in this plain, whence they go to join the forks at Clark's, otherwise called the Flathead river. This valley extends about ten miles. While the tents were being set up I perceived one of those formidable Blackfoot Indians in the act of hiding himself. I did not speak of it to my young companions, fearing that I might not be able to prevent a bloody struggle between them. I, however, took the precaution of having a good watch kept over our horses.

The next day was Sunday, a day of rest. I celebrated the holy sacrifice of the mass, and baptized three little children of the Pointed Hearts' tribe, whose parents had joined us on the road. The rest of the day was spent in prayer and instructions. The chief of our band, Técousten, twice addressed his companions, and spoke with much force and precision on the different portions of our religion, which he already had heard explained.

The 1st of November — All Saints' Day — after having celebrated the holy sacrifice under a large poplar tree, we proceeded on our journey through a defile of about six miles. At the ford of Clark's Fork, we met two encampments of the Kalispel tribe, who, having heard of our approach, had come thither to see us. Men, women and children ran to meet us, and pressed our hands with every demonstration of sincere joy. The chief of the first camp was called Chalax. As we had a barren country ahead of us, he procured six bales of buffalo meat for us. I baptized twenty-four children in his little village, and one young woman, a Kootenai, who was dying. The chief of the second camp was named Hoytelpo; his band occupied thirty huts. I spent the night amongst them; and, although they had never seen me before, they knew all the prayers that I had taught the Flatheads on my first journey. The fact is, on hearing of my arrival in the mountains, they deputed an intelligent young man to meet me, and who was also gifted with a good memory. Having learned the prayers and canticles, and such points as were most essential for salvation, he repeated to the village all that he had heard and seen. He had acquitted himself of his commission so well, and with so much zeal, that he gave instructions to his people during the course of the winter. The same desire for information concerning religion had communicated itself to the other small camps, and with the same cheering success. It was, as you can easily imagine, a great consolation for me to see the sign of the cross and hear prayers addressed to the great God, and his praises sung, in a desert of about 300 miles extent, where a Catholic priest had never been before. They were overjoyed when they heard that I hoped before long to be able to leave a missionary amongst them. They had already taken a step toward the civilized life by attempting the cultivation of potatoes. They offered me some, which were the first I had seen since I left the United States. Their lodges are made of mats of rushes, like those of the Potawatomies, east of the mountains.

I cannot pass over in silence a beautiful custom that is observed by these good people: every evening, after prayers, the chief instructs his people, or gives them some salutary advice, to which they all listen with most profound attention, respect and modesty. To see them at their devotions one would be more apt to mistake them for members of a religious order than savages. The next day, before my departure, I baptized twenty-seven children of the tribe.

That morning we crossed a mountain and entered the great Camas plain. Wolves are very numerous and very ferocious here; last spring they carried off and devoured more than forty of the Kalispels' horses. There is a boiling spring a short distance to the northeast. A mountainous defile ten miles long led us thence to the lovely Horse Prairie. A fine little lake, about six miles around, at the entrance to this prairie, I called the Lake of Souls, in honor of the church festival celebrated to-day. On that evening we alighted amongst fifteen huts of the same nation, who received us with equal kindness. Their chief had come several miles to meet me. He acknowledged frankly that having become acquainted with some American ministers, in the course of the summer — he had been told by them that my prayer (religion) was not a good one. "My heart is divided," said he, "and I do not know what to adhere to." I had no trouble in making him understand the difference between those gentlemen and priests, and the cause of their calumnious attacks against the only true church of Christ, which their ancestors had abandoned.

On the 3d of November, after prayers and instructions to the savages, we continued our march. We were on the borders of Clark's Fork, to which we were obliged to keep close during eight days, whilst we descended the country bordering the stream. The river is at this place of a greenish blue, very transparent, caused probably by the deposit of a great quantity of oxigen of iron [*sic*]. Our path during a great part of the day was on the declivity of a lofty, rocky mountain; we were here obliged to climb a steep rough pass from 400 to 600 feet high. I had before seen landscapes of awful grandeur, but this one certainly surpassed all others in horror. My courage failed at the first sight; it was impossible to remain on horseback, and on foot my weight of 211 pounds was no trifle. This, therefore, was the expedient to which I resorted: my mule Lizette was sufficiently docile and kind to allow me to grasp her tail, to which I held on firmly: crying at one moment aloud, and at other times making use of the whip to excite her courage, until the good beast conducted me safely to the very top of the mountain. There I breathed freely for a while, and contemplated the magnificent prospect that presented itself to my sight. The windings of the river with the scenery on its banks were before me; on one side hung over our heads rocks piled on rocks in the most precipitous manner, and on the other stood lofty peaks crowned with snow and pine trees: mountains of every shape and feature reared their towering forms before us. It really was a fine view and one which was well worth the effort we had made. On descending from this elevation I had to take new precautions. I preceded the mule, holding her by the bridle, while she moved cautiously down to the foot of the "Bad Rock" (as it is called by the savages), as though she feared stumbling and rolling with her master into the river which flowed beneath us.

At this place Clark's Fork runs through a narrow defile of rocky mountains; at times the soft murmurings of the waters charm the traveler, at others it spreads out and presents a calm surface clear as crystal. Wherever it is narrowed or intercepted by rocks it forms rapids, with falls and cascades; the noise of which, like that caused by a storm in the forest, is heard at a great distance. Nothing can be more diversified than this fine river. There is in this vicinity a great variety of trees, bushes and different species of the tamarisk tree. The lichnis, a medicinal plant mentioned by Charlevoix in his history of Canada, grows here abundantly.

We met in the course of that day with only one family, and that was of the Kalispel tribe. Whilst the women were rowing up the river their light canoe, made of fir-tree bark, which contained their children and all the baggage, the men followed along the bank with their rifles or bows in their hands in pursuit of game. In all the little meadows or bottom-lands that we traversed, we saw a great number of horses, which the savages leave there, unguarded, often for months at a time; this they call "caging" the horses; in fact, they seldom wander very far away.

On the 4th we entered a cedar and pine forest so dense that in its whole length we could scarcely see beyond the distance of twenty yards. Our beasts of burden suffered a great deal in it from the want of grass. We scarcely got through it after three days' march. It was a real labyrinth; from morning till night we did nothing but wind about to avoid thousands of trees, fallen from either fire, storms or age. On issuing from this forest we were charmed by an interesting prospect: Our view extended over the whole surface of the lake called Pend d'Oreille, studded with small islands covered with woods; over its inlets and the hills which overlook them, and which have for the most part their base on the borders of the lake and rise by gradual terraces or elevations until they reach the adjoining mountains, which are covered with perpetual snow. The lake is about thirty miles long and from four to seven wide. Another spectacle, still more magnificent, had arrested our attention before we reached the lake. At the head of it we traversed a forest, which is certainly a wonder of its kind; there is probably nothing similar to it in America. The savages speak of it as the finest in Oregon, and really every tree which it contains is enormous in its kind. The birch, elm and beach, generally small elsewhere, like the toad of

La Fontaine, that aimed at being as large as the ox, swell out here to twice their size. They would fain rival the cedar, the Goliath of the forest, who, however, looking down with contempt upon his pitiful companions,

> "Elève aux cieux
> Son front audacieux."

The birch and beech at its side resemble large candelabra placed around a massive column. Cedars of four and five fathoms in circumference are here very common; we saw some six, and I measured one forty-two feet in circumference. A cedar of four fathoms, lying on the ground, measured more than 200 feet in length. The delicate branches of these noble trees entwine themselves above the beech and elm; their fine, dense and ever-green foliage forming an arch through which the sun's rays never penetrate; and this lofty vault, supported by thousands of columns, brought to the mind's eye the idea of an immense temple, reared by the hand of nature to the glory of its Author.

Before entering the forest we crossed a high mountain by a wild winding path. Its sides are covered with fine cedars and pines, which are, however, of smaller dimensions than those in the forest. Several times whilst ascending the mountain I found myself on parapets of rocks, whence, thanks to my safe-footed mule, I retired in safety. Once I thought my career at an end. I had wandered from my companions, and following the path, I all at once came to a rocky projection which terminated in a point about two feet wide; before me was a perpendicular descent of three feet; on my left stood a rock as straight as a wall, and on my right yawned a precipice of about a thousand feet. You can conceive that my situation was anything but pleasant. The slightest false step would have plunged the mule and her rider into the abyss beneath. To descend was impossible, as on one side I was closed in by the rock, and suspended over a dreadful chasm on the other. My mule had stopped at the commencement of the descent, and not having any time to lose, I recommended myself to God, and as a last expedient sank my spurs deeply into the sides of my poor beast; she made one bold leap and safely landed me on another parapet much larger than that I had left.

The history of the fine forest, and my leap from the dangerous rock, will be treated with incredulity by many of your acquaintance. If so, tell them that I invite them to visit both these places: "*Venite et videte.*" I promise them beforehand that they will admire with me the wonders of nature. They will have, like me, their moments of admiration and of fear.

I cannot pass over in silence the pleasant meeting I had in the depth of the forest. I discovered a little hut of rushes, situated on the banks of the river. Raising my voice to its highest pitch, I tried to make its inhabitants hear me, but received no answer. I felt an irresistible desire to visit it, and accordingly made my interpreter accompany me. We found it occupied by a poor old woman, who was blind and very ill. I spoke to her of the Great Spirit, of the most essential dogmas of our faith and of baptism. The example of the Apostle St. Philip teaches us that there are cases when all the requisite dispositions may entirely consist in an act of faith, and in the sincere desire to enter heaven by the right path. All the answers of the poor old woman were respectful, and breathing the love of God. "Yes," she would say, "I love the Great Spirit with my whole heart; all my life he has been very kind to me. Yes, I wish to be his child, I want to be his forever." And immediately she fell on her knees and begged me to give her baptism. I named her Mary, and placed around her neck the miraculous medal of the Blessed Virgin. After leaving her, I overheard her thanking God for this fortunate adventure.

I had scarcely regained the path, when I met her husband, almost bent to the earth by age and infirmity; he could hardly drag himself along. He had been setting a trap in the forest for the bucks. The Flatheads who had preceded me had told him of my arrival. As soon, therefore, as he perceived me, he began to cry out, with a trembling voice: "Oh, how delighted I am to see our Father before I die. The Great Spirit is good — oh, how happy my heart is." And the venerable old man pressed my hand most affectionately, repeating again and again the same expressions. Tears fell from my eyes on witnessing such affection. I told him that I had just left his hut, and had baptized his wife. "I heard," said he, "of your arrival in our mountains, and of your baptizing many of our people. I am poor and old; I had hardly dared to hope for the happiness of seeing you. Black-gown, make me as happy as you have made my wife. I wish also to belong to God, and we will always love him." I conducted him to the borders of a stream that flowed near us, and after a brief instruction, I administered to him the holy sacrament of baptism, naming him Simon. On seeing me depart, he repeated, impressively: "Oh, how good is the Great Spirit. I thank you, Skylax (Black-robe), for the favor you have conferred on me. Oh, how happy is my heart. Yes, I will always love the Great Spirit. Oh, how good the Great Spirit is; how good he is."

During that same journey, I discovered in a little hut of bulrushes five old men, who appeared to be fourscore years old. Three of them were blind, and the other two had but one eye each; they were almost naked, and offered a real personification of human misery. I spoke to them for a considerable time on the means of salvation, and on the bliss of another world. Their answers edified me much, and affected me even to tears; they were replete with the love of God, a desire of doing right and of dying well. You might have heard these good old men crying out from different parts of the hut, forming together a touching chorus, to which I sincerely wished that all the children of St. Ignatius could have listened. "O Great Spirit, what a happiness is coming to us in our old days! We will love you, O Great Spirit. *Le-mele Kaikolinzoeten; one le-mele eltelill.* We will love you, O Great Spirit. Yes, we will love you till death."

When we explained to them the necessity of baptism, they demanded it earnestly, and knelt down to receive it. I have not found as yet amongst these Indians, I will not say opposition, but not even coldness or indifference.

These little adventures are our great consolation. I would not have exchanged my situation, at that moment, for any other on earth. I was convinced that such incidents alone were worth a journey to the mountains. Ah, good and dear fathers, who may read these lines, I conjure you, through the mercy of our Divine Redeemer, not to hesitate entering this vineyard; its harvest is ripe and abundant. Does not our Savior tell us: *"Ignem veni mittere in terram et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?"* It is amidst the poor tribes of these isolated mountains that the fire of divine grace burns with ardor. Superstitious practices have disappeared; nor have they amongst them the castes of East India. Speak to these savages of heavenly things; at once their hearts are inflamed with divine love; and immediately they go seriously about the great affair of their salvation. Day and night they are at our sides, insatiable for the Bread of Life. Often, on retiring, we hear them say, "Our sins, no doubt, rendered us so long unworthy to hear these consoling words."

As to privations and dangers, the Oregon missionaries must expect them, for they will certainly meet them, but in a good cause. Sometimes they will be obliged to fast, but a better appetite will be their reward. Their escapes from the many dangers of the road, or from enemies always on the alert, teach them to confide in God alone, and ever to keep their accounts in order. I here feel the full application of that consoling text of the scripture: "My yoke is sweet, and my burden is light." At the last day it will be manifest that the holy name of Jesus has performed wonders amongst these poor people. Their eagerness to hear the glad tidings of salvation is certainly at its height. They came from all parts and from great distances, to meet me on my way, and presented all their young children and dying relatives for baptism. Many followed me for whole days, with the sole desire of receiving instructions. Really our hearts bled at the sight of so many souls who are lost for the want of religion's divine and saving assistance. Here again may we cry out with the scripture: "The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few." What Father is there in the Society whose zeal will not be enkindled on hearing these details? And where is the Christian who would refuse his mite to such a work as that of the Propagation of the Faith? that precious pearl of the Church, which procures salvation to so many souls who otherwise would perish unaided and forever.

During my journey, which lasted forty-two days, I baptized 190 persons, of whom twenty-six were adults, sick, or in extreme old age; I preached to more than 2,000 Indians; who, thus evidently conducted into my way by Providence, will not, I trust, tarry long in ranging themselves under the banner of Jesus Christ. With the assistance of my catechists, the Flatheads, who were as yet but catechumens, the conversion of the Kalispel tribe was so far advanced that when the time came round for the winter's hunting, the Reverend Father Point enjoyed the consolation of seeing them join the Flathead tribe, with the sole desire of profiting by the missionary's presence. This gave him an opportunity to instruct and baptize a great number on the Purification and on the feasts of the Canonization of St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier.

I found among these Indians several little children that had been baptized by the reverend and zealous M. Demers,[3] a Canadian priest resident at Willamette, not far from the Pacific, and who has made a number of excursions as far as Fort Colville.

We spent Sunday, the 7th of November, in devotional practices with three Kalispel families on the shore of the lake of that name, where we had arrived the evening before, as I related above. Two boats loaded with merchandise, in charge of eight half-breeds in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company, also arrived in time to assist at the divine offices. Among them was Charles, the Flathead interpreter who had rendered me such great services the year before. I gave thanks to God for this fortunate meeting; he was on his way to join me again for this year. I owe this excellent interpreter to the worthy and respectable governor of the Hudson Bay Company, Mr. McLoughlin,[4] in whose service Charles was engaged.

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[3] Modeste Demers, born near Quebec in 1808; crossed the continent with Reverend F. N. Blanchet in 1838, to make a beginning of Catholic work on Puget Sound; first bishop of Vancouver Island; died at Victoria, July 28, 1871. Frequently mentioned in the present work.

[4] Doctor John McLoughlin is one of the grand historic characters of Oregon. He was born in Canada, October 19, 1784. Educated in Paris, but entered the fur trade in the Northwest Company service at an early age. About 1818 he married a Scotch-Indian half-breed, widow of Alexander McKay who was killed in the Tonquin massacre. In 1824 he was transferred to the Columbia river, where he soon rose to the position of Chief Factor, or "Governor." He selected the site of Fort Vancouver and transferred his headquarters there from Astoria in 1825-6. He was brought up in the Anglican Church, but became a Catholic after the missionaries of that faith came to Oregon. He resigned from the Hudson Bay Company service in 1845 and retired to private life at Oregon City. He became a naturalized citizen of the United States. His later years were embittered by land controversies, where his claims to important holdings were challenged by the immigrants. He died September 7, 1857.

He was a man of great dignity and force and of an extraordinarily fine presence. He was always scrupulously just and generous to the immigrants from the States and drew upon himself the criticism of his own people for his course in this respect. Many are the instances

We were three days in reaching the traverse of the Kalispels. Along the river we found at intervals a great number of little Indian camps of four to six lodges. These poor folk are obliged to scatter in winter to procure food by fishing and hunting. The Pend d'Oreille Traverse offers a fine location for a mission. There is a large and fertile prairie, wood will never fail, the river abounds in fish. At the bottom of the prairie is a little lake or marsh, about six miles in circumference, which is a rendezvous for all sorts of aquatic birds. A large number of Indian tribes would there be close at hand; the Cœur d'Alènes, the Spokans, the Kettles, the Simpoils,[8] the Kootenais, the Gens-du-lac, the Nez Percés and several others, are scarce more than two or three days' travel away. Besides Fort Colville is within a long day's ride, which would make it very easy to procure victuals, tools and clothing.

On the 13th we were eight hours in crossing a lofty snow-covered mountain. That evening, we had no more than made our camp, upon a little stream [Mill creek] which runs into the Columbia river, when we received a visit from several Kalispels. I was agreeably surprised by the petition of one of them: "I am just in from a hunt," he said, "where I have killed a deer; it is too late now to go after it, and to-morrow is the day of the Great Spirit (Sunday); would you permit me, Black-robe, to bring it home to-morrow, because my little children are fasting?" Admirable lesson for the Christians of Europe! This savage had never seen a priest but once in his life. Another made me a present of a goose that he had killed, a third gave me a little basket full of camas. I spent Sunday with them, to their great satisfaction.

After dinner next day [November 15th] we went on to the fort [Colville]. There we passed three days in repairing our saddles and packing our provisions and seeds. Wher-

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recorded of his noble acts to those who were in need, even when they came to his country on missions of commercial rivalry.

[8] Native form Snpuelish or Snpoilíqiq.

ever one finds the gentlemen of the Hudson Bay Company, one is sure of a good reception. They do not stop with demonstrations of politeness and affability, they anticipate your wishes in order to be of service to you. In this case, the commandant of the fort, Mr. Macdonald,[*] a Scot by birth, went so far as to have his lady prepare and put among our provisions, without my knowledge, all sorts of little extras, such as sugar, coffee, tea, chocolate, butter, crackers, flour, poultry, ham and candles.

Besides the instruction that I gave during mass to the Canadians employed at the fort, I had several conferences with the chief of the Skoyelpi or Kettle Indians, an intelligent man, who invited me to come and evangelize his nation. We left the fort on the 18th. Nothing very noteworthy happened during the return journey, unless it be a matter, which I will set down for the instruction of any who might be going our way; it only shows how useful it is sometimes to be distrustful, and that children of Eve are to be found everywhere. We had left with the Pend d'Oreilles five bales of dried meat. On our return we found only two; I asked the chief what had become of the others. "I am ashamed, Black-robe," he answered; "I am afraid to speak to you. You know that I was absent when you left your bales in my lodge. My wife opened them to see whether the meat had molded; the dépouilles (that is, the fat) looked so fair and so good that she tasted. When I came in, she offered me thereof, and to our children as well; the news was spread through the village; the neighbors came, and we all ate together." A few days more, and we would have found none at all. If this honest man had tried to imitate the history of our first parents, he could not have played his part better. This adventure gave me my occasion to instruct them in regard to this first of prevarications and its sad consequences. When I had finished the chief spoke again, and after scolding his wife well he protested in the name of all concerned that it would not happen again. Then these poor people tried as best they could to indemnify us, and offered us two bags of wild roots and a basket full of cakes of pine-moss, as hard as glue. Necessity compelled us to accept these novel cakes; they are prepared by boiling in water; they then form a thick elastic soup, having the appearance and the taste of soap. It can be eaten, if seasoned with a good appetite and a prolonged absence of other nourishment.

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[*] Archibald Macdonald, for twenty years previous to this time in the service of the Hudson Bay Company; founder of Fort Nisqually; entrusted with many important positions. In 1828 he accompanied George Simpson (later Sir George) on his tour of inspection, and afterward published a journal of the voyage.

On the 1st of December I found myself again in Horse Prairie, among the Kalispels, who had repaired thither from different parts of the mountains to see me as I returned. I stayed with them three days, instructing and exhorting them from morning till evening. My ten young Flatheads all assumed the functions of catechists, and went about it with a zeal which could be equaled only by the assiduity, attention and eagerness to learn of the savages who listened to them. On the 3d, the feast of St. Francis Xavier, I baptized sixty persons in this place, of whom thirteen were adults. The night preceding had been very stormy, as if hell had been unchained against us. A terrible gust of wind carried my tent away and cast it into the branches of a great pine. As I could not replace it, I found myself exposed for the rest of the night to hail, snow and rain; but there is a remedy for every evil; I found one under a thick buffalo robe, where I passed the time that was left me for sleep agreeably enough.

On the 8th we reached once more our little establishment of St. Mary's, amid shooting and shouting from our good Indians running to meet us.

CHAPTER IX.[1]

AFFAIRS AT ST. MARY'S 1841–2.

Miraculous apparition to Flathead youth on Christmas eve — Point's hardships on the buffalo hunt — Visitors from the Blackfeet — Fame of the Flatheads growing — Their modesty.

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ON my return, the 8th of December, I continued instructing those of the Flatheads who had not been baptized. On Christmas day I added 150 new baptisms to those of the 3d of December, and thirty-two rehabilitations of marriage; so that the Flatheads, some sooner and others later, but all, with very few exceptions, had, in the space of three months, complied with everything necessary to merit the glorious title of true children of God. Accordingly on Christmas eve, a few hours before the midnight mass, the village of St. Mary was deemed worthy of a special mark of heaven's favor. The Blessed Virgin appeared to a little orphan boy named Paul, in the hut of an aged and truly pious woman. The youth, piety and sincerity of this child, joined to the nature of the fact which he related, forbade us to doubt the truth of his statement. The following is what he recounted to me with his own innocent lips: "Upon entering John's hut, whither I had gone to learn my prayers, which I did not know, I saw some one who was very beautiful — her feet did not touch the earth, her garments were as white as snow; she had a star over her head, a serpent under her feet; and near the serpent was a fruit which I did not recognize. I could see her heart, from which rays of light burst forth and shone upon me. When I first beheld all this I was frightened, but afterward my fear left me; my heart was warmed, my mind clear, and I do not know how it happened, but all at once I knew my prayers." (To be brief I omit several circumstances.) He ended his account by saying that several times the same person had appeared to him whilst he was sleeping; and that once she had told him she was pleased that the first village of the Flatheads should be called "St. Mary." The child had never seen or heard before anything of the kind; he did not even know if the person was a man or woman, because the appearance of the dress which she wore was entirely unknown to him. Several persons having interrogated the child on this subject, have found him unvarying in his answers. He continues by his conduct to be the angel of his tribe.

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[1] This chapter and that following are taken from Book II of the *Letters and Sketches*, purporting to have been written to a Father of the Society from the Madison Forks, August 15, 1842.

On the 23d of December, Father Point, at the head of the inhabitants of forty lodges, started for the buffalo hunt.[3] On the road they met with huntsmen of five or six

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[3] "The plan of accompanying the Indians on these long hunting excursions had seemed advisable to the Fathers at first, and was adopted by them a few times at the beginning of the missions. The object the missionaries had in view, was that the Indians might not be left so long a time without instruction and the comforts of religion; that assistance be rendered to such as might fall sick and die during the hunt; also, that the presence and influence of the Black-robe among them might restrain the Indians from the disorders and excesses, of which the great hunts were always the cause or the occasion. All good and solid reasons.

"But, notwithstanding, the position in which the missionary was here placed was a most delicate one. The buffalo plains were not only the common hunting-grounds of many hostile tribes, but their ordinary battle-fields, and the presence of the Father with any one tribe under these circumstances, was very apt to commit him alike to the friendly and the hostile, greatly to the detriment of his authority and efficiency in promoting the spiritual welfare of the Indians: to the hostile, since from the fact of his being in the enemy's camp, he would naturally be looked upon as being in league with the enemy. On the other hand, in the case of prisoners, his advice to the Indians different tribes, some of whom followed him to the termination of the chase, from the desire of learning their prayers. The Flatheads having prolonged their stay at St. Mary's as long as they possibly could, so as not to depart without receiving baptism, experienced such a famine, the first weeks of January, that their poor dogs, having not even a bone to gnaw, devoured the very straps of leather with which they tied their horses during the night. The cold moreover was so uninterruptedly severe that during the hunting season, which lasted three months, such a quantity of snow fell that many were attacked with a painful blindness, vulgarly called "snow disease." One day when the wind was very high, and the snow falling and freezing harder than usual, Father Point became suddenly very pale, and would no doubt have been frozen to death in the midst of the plain, had not some travelers, perceiving the change in his countenance, kindled a large fire. But neither wind, ice, nor famine prevented the zealous Flatheads from performing on this journey all they were accustomed to do at St. Mary's. Every morning and evening they assembled around the missionary's lodge, and more than three-fourths of them without any shelter but the sky, after having recited their prayers, listened to an instruction, preceded and followed by hymns. At daybreak and sunset the bell was tolled three times for the Angelical Salutation. The Sunday was religiously kept; an observance which was so acceptable to God, that once especially it was recompensed in a very visible manner.

whom he was accompanying would always be, as a matter of course, for lenity and mercy. But lenity and mercy were seldom, if ever, practiced by the natives toward an enemy captured in war. The Father was, therefore, liable to be suspected even by these, and thus his efficiency among them would be impaired. * * * Further, it was not long before the Fathers found out by their own experience that the Indians, whilst on the great hunts, were a prey to the wildest excitement, which left little, if any, room for religious instruction. The plan of accompanying them on their buffalo hunts was, therefore, very soon after abandoned."—*Palladino.*

The following is what I read in the Journal kept by Father Point during the winter's hunt.

"Sixth February.— To-day, Sunday, a very high wind, the sky greyish, and the thermometer at the freezing point; no grass for the horses; the buffaloes driven off by the Nez Percés. The 7th, the cold more piercing — food for our horses still scarcer — the snow increasing; but yesterday was a time of perfect rest, and the fruits of it show themselves to-day in perfect resignation and confidence. At noon we reach the summit of a mountain, and what a change awaits us. The sun shines, the cold has lost its intensity; we have in view an immense plain, and in that plain good pasturages, which are clouded with buffaloes. The encampment stops, the hunters assemble, and before sunset 155 buffaloes have fallen by their arrows. One must confess that if this hunt were *not* miraculous, it bears a great resemblance to the draught of fishes made by Peter when casting his net at the word of the Lord, he drew up 153 fishes.— St. John, xxi. 11. The Flatheads confided in the Lord, and were equally successful in killing 153 buffaloes. What a fine draught of fishes! but what a glorious hunt of buffaloes! Represent to yourself an immense amphitheatre of mountains, the least of which exceeds in height Montmartre, and in the midst of this majestic enclosure a plain more extensive than that of Paris, and on this magnificent plain a multitude of animals, the least of which surpasses in size the largest ox in Europe. Such was the park in which our Indians hunted.

"Wishing to pursue them," continues Father Point, in his journal, "I urged on my horse to a herd of fugitives, and as he was fresh, I had no difficulty in getting up to them. I even succeeded in compelling the foremost to abandon his post, but enraged, he stopped short, and presented such a terrible front, that I thought it more prudent to open a passage and let him escape. I acted wisely, as on the same day one of these animals, in his fall, overturned a horse and his rider. Fortunately, however, the latter was more dexterous than I should have been in such a perilous situation; he aimed his blows so promptly and well, that of the three who were thrown, only two arose. On another occasion, a hunter who had been also dismounted, had no other means to avoid being torn to pieces than to seize the animal by the horns just at the time he was about to trample him to death. A third hunter, fleeing at all speed, felt himself stopped by the plaited tail of his horse hooked on the buffalo's horn; but both, fearing a trap, made every effort to disengage themselves."

The buffalo hunt is attended with dangers, but the greatest of these does not consist in the mere pursuit of the animal, but proceeds rather from the bands of Blackfeet who constantly lurk in these regions, especially when there is some prospect of meeting with the larger game, or stealing a number of horses. Of all the mountain savages the Blackfeet are the most numerous and wicked and the greatest thieves. Happily, however, from having been often beaten by the smaller tribes, they have become so dastardly, that unless they are twenty to one they confine their attacks to the horses, which, thanks to the carelessness of their courageous enemies, they go about with so much dexterity and success, that this year, while our good Flatheads were asleep, they discovered their animals as often as twenty times, and carried off more than 100 of them.

During the winter, about twenty of these gentlemen visited the Flatheads in the daytime, and without stealing anything, but in this manner. There resided in the camp an old chief of the Blackfeet tribe, who had been baptized on Christmas day, and named Nicholas; this good savage, knowing that the missionary would willingly hold an interview with his brethren, undertook himself to harangue them during the night, and so well did he acquit himself, that upon the calumet's being planted on the limits of the camp, and the messenger being admitted to an audience, singing was heard in the neighboring mountains, and soon after a band of these brigands issued, armed as warriors, from the gloomy defile. They were received as friends, and four of the principals were ushered into the missionary's lodge; they smoked the calumet and discussed the news of the day. The missionary spoke of the necessity of prayer, to which subject they listened most attentively; nor did they manifest either surprise or repugnance. They told him that there had arrived recently in one of their forests a man who was not married, and who wore on his breast a large crucifix, read every day in a big book, and made the sign of the cross before eating anything; and in fine, that he was dressed exactly like the Black-robes at St. Mary's.[8] The Father did everything in his power to gain their good will — after which they were conducted to the best lodge in the encampment. It certainly would seem that such hosts were worthy of better guests. However, toward the middle of the night, the explosion of fire-arms was heard. It was soon discovered that a Flathead was firing at a Blackfoot, just as the latter was leaving the camp, taking with him four horses. Fortunately, the robber was not one of the band that had been received within the encampment, which, upon being proved, far from creating any suspicion, on the contrary, had the effect of their kindly offering them a grave for the unfortunate man. But whether they wished to appear to disapprove of the deed, or that they anticipated dangers from reprisals, they left the wolves to bury the body, and took their departure. Good Nicholas, the orator, joined them, in order to render the same services to the others that he had to these. He went off, promising to return soon with the evidences of his success. He has not been seen as yet, but we are informed that he and his companions have spoken so favorably of prayer and the Black-robes, that already the Sunday is religiously observed in the camp where Nicholas resides, and that a great chief, with the people of sixty lodges, intend shortly to make our acquaintance and attach themselves to the Flatheads.

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[8] Probably Father Demers visiting the posts.

In the meanwhile divine justice is punishing rigorously a number of their robbers. This year the Nez Percés caught twelve of them in flagrant faults, and killed them. About the time that the Blackfoot above mentioned met his fate at the hands of a Flathead, thirty others were receiving the reward due to their crimes, from the Pend-d'Oreille tribe. A very remarkable fact in this last encounter is that of the four who commenced, and the others who finished it, not one fell; although, in order to break in on the delinquents, who were intrenched behind a kind of rampart, they were obliged to expose themselves to a brisk fire. I saw the field of combat some time afterward. Of the thirty robbers who had been slain, only five or six heads remained, and those so disfigured as to lead one to think that an age had already elapsed since their death.

Two years before, the same tribe (Pend-d'Oreilles), assisted by the Flatheads, making in all a band of seventy men, stood an attack of 1,500 Blackfeet, whom they defeated, killing in five days, during which time the battle lasted, fifty of their foes, without losing a single man on their side. They would not commence the attack until they had recited their prayers on their knees. A few days ago, the spot was pointed out to me where six Flatheads withstood 160 Blackfeet with so much resolution, that with a handful of their men who came to their aid, they gained the victory.

The most perfidious nation, after the Blackfeet, is the Bannock tribe; they also bear the Flatheads much ill will. It has happened more than once that at the very moment the Bannock tribe were receiving the greatest proofs of friendship from the Flatheads, the former were plotting their ruin. Of this you have already had one proof, but here is another. One day a detachment of 200 Bannocks visited the camp of the Flatheads, and after smoking with them returned to their encampment. The small number of the Flatheads had not, however, escaped their notice, and they determined to take advantage of their apparent weakness. Accordingly, they retraced their steps that very night to execute their base designs. But the chief, named Michael, having been advised of their intention, assembled in haste his twenty warriors, and after entreating them to confide in God, he rushed on these traitors so happily and vigorously that at the first shock they were routed. Already nine of the fugitives had fallen, and most of the others would have shared the same fate if Michael, in the very heat of the pursuit, had not recollected that it was Sunday, and on that account stopped his brave companions, saying: "My friends, it is now the time for prayer; we must retire to our camp."

It is by these and similar exploits, wherein the finger of God is visible, that the Flatheads have acquired such a reputation for valor, that notwithstanding their inferior numbers, they are feared much more than they on their side dread their bitterest enemies. These victories, however, cannot but be fatal even to the conquerors; hence we will strive to inspire all with the love of peace, which may be accomplished if each party remains at home. For this purpose we must create among them a greater taste for agriculture than for hunting. But how can we compass this unless the same measures are employed for the missions of the Rocky Mountains that were so happily adopted for Paraguay? If the true friends of religion only knew of what the Indians who surround us are capable when once converted, I cannot doubt but that they would assist us in our efforts to accomplish so beautiful, so advantageous a project. It is, moreover, through the Iroquois of the North, whose cruelty formerly exceeded that of the Blackfeet, that the knowledge of the true God came to the Flatheads, and awakened amongst them the desire of possessing the Black-gowns. We have seen to what dangers the good Flatheads exposed themselves to obtain missionaries, and what sacrifices they have made to merit the title of children of God; and now what is their actual progress? In their village, enmities, quarrels and calumnies are unknown; they are sincere and upright amongst themselves, and full of confidence in their missionaries. They carry this to such a degree that they place implicit reliance on their veracity, and cannot suppose that they have anything else in view but their happiness; they have no difficulty in believing the mysteries of our faith, or in approaching the tribunal of penance: difficulties which appear insurmountable to the pride and cowardice of many civilized Christians. The first time they were asked if they believed firmly in all that was contained in the Apostles' Creed, they answered, "Yes — very much." When they were spoken to about confession, some wished it to be public.

This will explain to you how it happened that before we resided three months amongst them we were enabled to baptize all the adults, and four months later to admit a large number to frequent communion. There are whole families who never let a Sunday go by without approaching the holy table. Often twenty confessions are heard consecutively without there being matter for absolution. This year we performed the devotion of the month of Mary, and I can flatter myself that the exercises were attended with as much piety and edification as in the most devout parishes of Europe. At the end of the month a statue was borne in triumph to the very place where our Blessed Mother deigned to honor us with the aforementioned apparition. Since that day a sort of pilgrimage has been established there, under the name of "Our Lady of Prayer." None pass the pious monument without stopping to pray on their knees; the more devout come regularly twice a day to speak to their Mother and her divine Son, and the children add to their prayers the most beautiful flowers they can cull in the prairies.

On the feast of the Sacred Heart we made use of this monument, decorated with garlands of flowers, as a repository, and our people received for the first time the benediction of the blessed sacrament; a happiness which they now enjoy every Sunday after vespers. Some of them already understand the nature of the devotion of the Sacred Heart. To propagate it we have laid the foundations of several societies, of which all the most virtuous men, women and young people have become members. Victor, the great chief, is prefect of one of these associations, and Agnes, his wife, is president of another. They were not elected through any deference for their dignity or birth, but solely on account of their great personal merits. A fact which proves that the Flatheads regard merit more than rank is, that the place of great chief becoming vacant by the death of Peter, they chose for his successor the chief of the men's society, and for no other reason did he obtain this high dignity than for the noble qualities, both of heart and head, which they all thought he possessed. Every night and morning, when all is quiet in the camp, he harangues the people; the subject of his discourse being principally a repetition of what the Black-robes have said before. This good chief walks faithfully in the footsteps of his predecessor, which is no slight praise. This last, who was baptized at the age of eighty, and admitted to communion in his eighty-second year, was the first to deserve this double favor, more on account of his virtue than his years. The day of his baptism he said to me, "If during my life I have committed faults they were those of ignorance; it appears to me that I never did anything, knowing it to be wrong." At the time of his first communion, which preceded his death but a few days, having been asked if he had not some faults with which to reproach himself since his baptism — "Faults," he replied, with surprise, "how could I ever commit any, I whose duty it is to teach others how to do good?" He was buried in the red drapery he was accustomed to hang out on Sunday to announce that it was the day of the Lord. Alphonsus in the prime of youth soon followed him. He said to me, on the day of his baptism: "I dread so much offending again the Great Spirit, that I beg of him to grant me the grace to die soon." He fell sick a few days afterward and expired with the most Christian dispositions, thanking God for having granted his prayer. In the hope of their glorious resurrection, their mortal remains have been deposited at the foot of the large cross.

Of twenty persons who died within the year, we have no reason to fear for the salvation of one.

CHAPTER X.

JOURNEY TO VANCOUVER AND THE WILLAMETTE AND RETURN — 1842.

Start for Fort Vancouver — Visit to the Kalispels and Kootenais — Digestive feats of the natives — Beginning of work among the Cœur d'Alènes — Their territory — The Cabinets — Protestant missionaries' methods — Iconoclast Parker — Visit to the Skoyelpi and Okinagans — Accident to interpreter Charles — Down Columbia in Ogden's barge — Boat crew drowned — Meets Blanchet and Demers at Vancouver — Kindness of Dr. McLoughlin — Mortality among inhabitants — Across country from Walla Walla — Follows Flatheads after buffalo — Decides to return to States.

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NOT having been able this year to obtain either provisions or sufficient clothes to supply the wants of our mission, I started (April 13th) for Fort Vancouver, the great mart of the honorable Hudson Bay Company, and distant about a thousand miles from our establishment. The continuation of this narrative will show you that this necessary journey was providential. I found myself during this trip a second time amongst the Kalispel tribe.

They continue with much fervor to assemble every morning and evening to recite prayers in common, and manifest the same attention and assiduity in listening to our instructions. The chiefs on their side are incessant in exhorting the people to the practice of every good work. The two principal obstacles that prevent a great number from receiving baptism are — first, the plurality of wives; many have not the courage to separate themselves from those by whom they have children. The second is their fondness for gambling, in which they risk everything. I baptized sixty adults amongst them during this last journey.

Crossing a beautiful plain near the Clark or Flathead river, called the Horse Prairie, I heard that there were thirty lodges of the Skalzi or Kootenai tribe at about two days' journey from us. I determined whilst awaiting the descent of the skiff, which could only start six days later, to pay them a visit, for they had never seen a priest in their lands before. Two half-breeds served as my guides and escorts on this occasion. We galloped and trotted all the day, traveling a distance of sixty miles. We spent a quiet night in a deep defile, stretched near a good fire, but in the open air.

The next day (April 14th), after having traversed several mountains and valleys, where our horses were up to their knees in snow, we arrived about three o'clock in sight of the Kootenai camp. They assembled immediately on my approach; when I was about twenty yards from them the warriors presented their arms, which they had hidden until then under their buffalo robes. They fired a general salute, which frightened my mule and made her rear and prance, to the great amusement of the savages. They then defiled before me, giving their hands in token of friendship and congratulation. I observed that each one lifted his hand to his forehead after having presented it to me. I soon convoked the council in order to inform them of the object of my visit. They unanimously declared themselves in favor of my religion, and adopted the beautiful custom of their neighbors, the Flatheads, to meet night and morning for prayers in common. I assembled them that very evening for this object and gave them a long instruction on the principal dogmas of our faith. The next day I baptized all their little children and nine of their adults, previously instructed, amongst whom was the wife of an Iroquois, who had resided for thirty years with this tribe. The Iroquois and a Canadian occupy themselves in the absence of a priest in instructing them.

My visit could not be long; I left the Kootenai village about twelve o'clock, accompanied by twelve of these warriors and some half-blood Crees, whom I had baptized in

1840. They wished to escort me to the entrance of the large Flathead lake, with the desire of giving me a farewell feast; a real banquet of all the good things their country produced. The warriors had gone on ahead and dispersed in every direction, some to hunt and others to fish. The latter only succeeded in catching a single trout. The warriors returned in the evening with a bear, goose and six swan's eggs. *"Sed quid hoc inter tantos?"* The fish and goose were roasted before a good fire, and the whole mess was soon presented to me. Most of my companions preferring to fast, I expressed my regret at it, consoling them, however, by telling them that God would certainly reward their kindness to me. A moment after we heard the last hunter returning, who we thought had gone back to the camp. Hope shone on every countenance. The warrior soon appeared laden with a large elk, and hunger that night was banished from the camp. Each one began to occupy himself; some cut up the animal, others heaped fuel on the fire and prepared sticks and spits to roast the meat. The feast which had commenced under such poor auspices continued a great part of the night. The whole animal, excepting a small piece that was reserved for my breakfast, had disappeared before they retired to sleep. This is a sample of savage life. The Indian when he has nothing to eat does not complain, but in the midst of abundance he knows no moderation. The stomach of a savage has always been a riddle to me.

The plain that commands a view of the lake is one of the most fertile in the mountainous regions. The Flathead river runs through it and extends more than 200 miles to the northeast. It is wide and deep, abounding with fish and lined with wood, principally with the cottonwood, aspen, pine and birch. There are beautiful sites for villages, but the vicinity of the Blackfeet must delay for a long while the good work, as they are only at two days' march from the great district occupied by these brigands, from whence they often issue to pay their neighbors predatory visits. A second obstacle would be the great distance from any post of the Hudson Bay Company; consequently the difficulty of procuring what is strictly necessary. The lake is highly romantic, and is from forty to fifty miles long. Mountainous and rocky islands of all sizes are scattered over its bosom, which present an enchanting prospect. These islands are filled with wild horses. Lofty mountains surround the lake and rise from its very brink.

On the 16th of April, after bidding adieu to my traveling companions, I started early in the morning, accompanied by two Canadians and two savages. That evening we encamped close to a delightful spring, which was warm and sulphurous, having traveled a distance of about fifty miles. When the savages reach this spring they generally bathe in it. They told me that after the fatigues of a long journey they find that bathing in this water greatly refreshes them. I found here ten lodges of the Kalispel tribe; the chief, who was by birth of the Nez Percé tribe, invited me to spend the night in his wigwam, where he treated me most hospitably. This was the only small Kalispel camp that I had as yet met in my journeys. I here established, as I have done wherever I stopped, the custom of morning and evening prayers.

During the evening the chief, who had looked very gloomy, made a public exposition of his whole life. "Blackrobe," said he, "you find yourself in the lodge of a most wicked and unhappy man; all the evil that a man could do on earth, I believe I have been guilty of: I have even assassinated several of my near relations; since then, there is nought in my heart but trouble, bitterness and remorse. Why does not the Great Spirit annihilate me? I still possess life, but there will be neither pardon nor mercy for me after death." These words and the feeling manner with which they were addressed to me drew tears of compassion from my eyes. "Poor, unfortunate man," I replied, "you are really to be pitied, but you increase your misery by thinking that you cannot obtain pardon. The devil, man's evil spirit, is the author of this bad thought. Do not listen to him, for he would wish to precipitate you into that bad place (hell). The Great Spirit who created you is a Father infinitely good and merciful. He does not desire the death of the sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live. He receives us into his favor and forgets our crimes, notwithstanding their number and enormity, the moment we return to him contrite and repentant. He will also forgive you if you walk in the path which his only Son, Jesus Christ, came on earth to trace for us."

I then recounted the instance of the good thief and the parable of the prodigal son. I made him sensible of the proof of God's goodness in sending me to him. I added that perhaps his life was drawing to a close, and that he might be in danger of falling into the bad place on account of his sins; that I would show him the right path, which if he followed he would certainly reach heaven. These few words were as balm poured on his wounded spirit. He became calmer, and joy and hope appeared on his countenance. "Black-robe," said he, "your words reanimate me: I see, I understand better now, you have consoled me, you have relieved me from a burden that was crushing me with its weight, for I thought myself lost. I will follow your directions; I will learn how to pray. Yes, I feel convinced that the Great Spirit will have pity on me." There was fortunately in the camp a young man who knew all the prayers, and was willing to serve as his catechist. His baptism was deferred until the autumn or winter.

The results of my visit to the Cœur d'Alènes were very consoling. They form a small but interesting tribe, animated with much fervor. As soon as they were certain of my visit, they deputed couriers in every direction to inform the savages of the approach of the Black-robe; and all, without exception, assembled at the outlet of the great lake which bears their name, and which was the place I had indicated. An ingenuous joy, joined to wonder and contentment, shone on every face when they saw me arrive in the midst of them.

Every one hastened to greet me. It was the first visit of the kind they had received, and the following is the order they observed. Their chiefs and old men marched at the head; next came the young men and boys; then followed the women — mothers, young girls, and little children. I was conducted in triumph by this multitude to the lodge of the great chief. Here, as everywhere else in the Indian country, the everlasting calumet was first produced, which went round two or three times in the most profound silence. The chief then addressed me, saying: "Black-robe, you are most welcome amongst us. We thank you for your charity toward us. For a long time we have wished to see you, and hear the words which will give us understanding. Our fathers invoked the sun and earth. I recollect very well when the knowledge of the true and one God came amongst them; since which time we have offered to him our prayers and vows. We are, however, to be pitied. We do not know the word of the Great Spirit. All is darkness as yet to us, but to-day I hope we shall see the light shine. Speak, Black-robe, I have done — every one is anxious to hear you."

I spoke to them for two hours on salvation and the end of man's creation, and not one person stirred from his place the whole time of the instruction. As it was almost sunset, I recited the prayers that I had translated into their language a few days before. After which I took some refreshments, consisting of fragments of dried meat and a piece of cooked moss, tasting like soap and as black as pitch. All this, however, was as grateful to my palate as though it had been honey and sugar, not having eaten a mouthful since daybreak. At their own request I then continued instructing the chiefs and their people until the night was far advanced. About every half hour I paused, and then the pipes would pass around to refresh the listeners and give time for reflection.

It was during these intervals that the chiefs conversed on what they had heard, and instructed and advised their followers. On awakening the next morning, I was surprised to find my lodge already filled with people. They had entered so quietly that I had not heard them. It was hardly daybreak when I arose, and they all, following my example, placed themselves on their knees, and we made together the offering of our hearts to God, with that of the actions of the day. After this the chief said: "Blackgown, we come here very early to observe you — we wish to imitate what you do. Your prayer is good; we wish to adopt it. But you will leave us after two nights more, and we have no one to teach us in your absence." I had the bell rung for morning prayers, promising him at the same time that the prayers should be known before I left them.

After a long instruction on the most important truths of religion, I collected around me all the little children, with the young boys and girls; I chose two from among the latter, to whom I taught the Hail Mary, assigning to each one his own particular part; then seven for the Our Father; ten others for the Commandments, and twelve for the Apostles' Creed. This method, which was my first trial of it, succeeded admirably. I repeated to each one his part until he knew it perfectly; I then made him repeat it five or six times. These little Indians, forming a triangle, resembled a choir of angels, and recited their prayers, to the great astonishment and satisfaction of the savages. They continued in this manner morning and night, until one of the chiefs learned all the prayers, which he then repeated in public.

I spent three days in instructing them. I would have remained longer, but the savages were without provisions. There was scarcely enough for one person in the whole camp. My own provisions were nearly out, and I was still four days' journey from Fort Colville. The second day of my stay among them, I baptized all their small children, and then twenty-four adults, who were infirm and very old. It appeared as though God had retained these good old people on earth to grant them the inexpressible happiness of receiving the sacrament of baptism before their death. They seemed by their transports of joy and gratitude at this moment, to express that sentiment of the scripture: "My soul is ready, O God, my soul is ready." Never did I experience in my visits to the savages so much satisfaction as on this occasion, not even when I visited the Flatheads in 1840; nor have I elsewhere seen more convincing proofs of sincere conversion to God. May he grant them to persevere in their virtuous resolutions. Reverend Father Point intends passing the winter with them to confirm them in their faith.[1] After some advice and salutary regulations, I left this interesting colony, and, I must acknowledge, with heartfelt regret. The great chief allowed himself scarcely a moment's repose for three nights I spent amongst them; he would rise from time to time to harangue the people, and repeat to them all he was able to remember of the instructions of the day. During the whole time of my mission, he continued at my side, so anxious was he not to lose a single word. The old chief, now in his eightieth year, was baptized by the name of Jesse.

In the spring the territory of this tribe enchants the traveler who may happen to traverse it. It is so diversified with noble plains and enameled with flowers, whose various forms and colors offer to experienced botanists an interesting *parterre.* These plains are surrounded by magnificent forests of pine, fir and cedar. To the west their country is open, and the view extends over several days' journey. To the south, east and north, you see towering mountains, ridge rising above ridge, robed with snow, and mingling their summits with the clouds, from which, at a distance, you can hardly distinguish them. The lake forms a striking feature in this beautiful prospect, and is about thirty miles in circumference. It is deep, and abounds in fish, particularly in salmon trout, common trout, carp, and a small, oily fish, very delicious, and tasting like the smelt. The Spokan river rises in the lake, and crosses the whole plain of the Cœur d'Alènes. The valley that borders above the lake is from four to five miles wide, exceedingly fertile, and the soil from ten to fifteen feet deep. Every spring, at the melting of the snow, it is subject to inundations, which scarcely ever last longer than four or five days; at the same time augmenting, as in Egypt, the fertility of the soil. The potato grows here very well, and in great abundance.

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[1] *Further history of the Cœur d'Alène Mission.*— The mission to the Cœur d'Alènes was accordingly opened by Father Point and Brother Huet, and the day of their arrival being the first Friday in November, the establishment received the name of Sacred Heart of Jesus in commemoration of the feast. "The site chosen, a beautiful spot in the fall, but mostly under water in the spring, lay on the banks of the St. Joseph river. But this location was changed in 1846 for another on the banks of Cœur d'Alène river, where the Fathers lived for a number of years. The place is known to-day as Cataldo, or Old Mission. Later on it was found convenient or necessary to locate the mission on the present site, known as De Smet, on Hangman's creek, not far from Farmington.—The Cœur d'Alènes are to-day the best and most industrious Indians in the Rocky Mountains."—*Palladino* (1891).

The Spokan river is wide, swift and deep in the spring, and contains, like all the rivers of Oregon, many rapid falls and cascades. The navigation of the waters of this immense territory is generally dangerous, and few risk themselves on them without being accompanied by experienced pilots. In descending Clark's river, we passed by some truly perilous and remarkable places, where the pilots have full opportunity to exhibit their dexterity and prudence. The rapids are numerous and the roar of the waters incessant, the current sweeping on at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour; the rugged banks and projecting rocks creating waves resembling those of the troubled sea. The skilful pilot mounts the waves, which seem ready to engulf us, the canoe speeds over the agitated waters, and with the aid of the paddle, skilfully plied, bears us unharmed through numberless dangers.

The most remarkable spot on this river is called the *Cabinets;* it consists of four apartments, which you have hardly time to examine, as you are scarcely half a minute passing by them. Represent to yourself chasms between two rocky mountains of a stupendous height, the river pent in between them in a bed of thirty or forty feet, precipitating itself down its rocky channel with irresistible fury, roaring against its jagged sides, and whitening with foam all around it. In a short space it winds in four different directions, resembling very much forked lightning. It requires very great skill, activity and presence of mind to extricate yourself from this difficult pass.[8]

The Spokan lands are sandy, gravelly and badly calculated for agriculture. The section over which I traveled consisted of immense plains of light, dry and sandy soil, and thin forests of gum pines. We saw nothing in this noiseless solitude but a buck, running quickly from us and disappearing almost immediately. From time to time the melancholy and piercing cry of the wood snipe increased the gloomy thoughts which this sad spot occasioned. Here, on a gay and smiling little plain, two ministers have settled themselves, with their wives, who had consented to share their husbands' *soi-distant* apostolical labors. During the four years they have spent here, they have baptized several of their own children. They cultivate a small farm, large enough, however, for their own maintenance and the support of their animals and fowls. It appears they are fearful that should they cultivate more they might have too frequent visits from the savages. They even try to prevent their encampment in their immediate neighborhood, and therefore they see and converse but seldom with the heathens, whom they have come so far to seek. A band of Spokans received me with every demonstration of friendship, and were enchanted to hear that the right kind of Black-robes intended soon to form an establishment in the vicinity. I baptized one of their little children who was dying.

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[8] The Northern Pacific road now runs along the brink of this chasm, and affords a startling view of the river from a great height.

It was in these parts that in 1836 a modern Iconoclast, named Parker, broke down a cross erected over the grave of a child by some Catholic Iroquois, telling us emphatically, in the narrative of his journey, that he did not wish to leave in that country an emblem of idolatry.[8] Poor man! — not to know better in this enlightened age! Were he to return to these mountains, he would hear the praises of the holy name of Jesus resounding among them; he would hear the Catholics chanting the love and mercies of God from the rivers, lakes, mountains, prairies, forests and coasts of the Columbia. He would behold the cross planted from shore to shore for the space of a thousand miles — on the loftiest height of the Pointed Heart territory, on the towering chain which separates the waters of the Missouri from the Columbia rivers; in the plains of the Willamette, Cowlitz and Bitter Root — and, whilst I am writing to you, the Reverend Mr. Demers is occupied in planting this same sacred symbol amongst the different tribes of New Caledonia. The words of him who said that this holy sign *would draw all men to himself*, begin to be verified with regard to the poor destitute sheep of this vast continent. Were he who destroyed that solitary, humble cross now to return, he would find the image of Jesus Christ crucified, borne on the breast of more than 4,000 Indians; and the smallest child would say to him: "Mr. Parker, we do not adore the cross; do not break it, because it reminds us of Jesus Christ who died on the cross to save us — we adore God alone."

In the beginning of May I arrived at Fort Colville on the Columbia river. This year the snow melted away very early; the mountain torrents had overflowed, and the small rivers that usually moved quietly along in the month of April, had suddenly left their beds and assumed the appearance of large rivers and lakes, completely flooding all the lowlands. This rendered my journey to Vancouver by land impossible, and induced me to wait, *nolens volens,* at the fort, for the construction of the barges, which were not ready until the 30th of the same month, when I was again able to pursue my journey on the river. On the same day that I arrived among the Skoyelpi or Chaudière tribe, who resided near the fort, I undertook to translate our prayers into their language. This kept me only one day, as their language is nearly the same as that of the Flatheads and Kalispels, having the same origin. They were all very attentive in attending my instructions, and the old as well as the young tried assiduously to learn their prayers. I baptized all the younger children who had not received the sacrament before, for Mr. Demers had already made two excursions amongst them, with the most gratifying success. The great chief and his wife had long sighed for baptism, which holy sacrament I administered to them, naming them Martin and Mary. This chief is one of the most intelligent and pious I have become acquainted with.

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[8] *Journal of an Exploring Tour Beyond the Rocky Mountains, under the Direction of the A B C F M: by Rev. Samuel Parker, A.M., p. 281.*

The work of God does not, however, proceed without contradictions; it is necessary to prepare one's self for them beforehand when undertaking any enterprise amongst the tribes. I have had some hard trials in all my visits. I expected them, when on the 13th of May, I started to see the Okinagan tribe, who were desirous to meet a priest. The interpreter, Charles, and the chief of the Skoyelpi, wished to accompany me. In crossing the Columbia river my mule returned to the shore, and ran at full speed into the forest; Charles pursued her, and two hours afterward I was told that he had been found dead in the prairie. I hastened immediately, and perceived from a distance a great gathering of people. I soon reached the spot where he was lying, and, to my great joy, perceived that he gave signs of life. He was, however, senseless, and in a most pitiful state. A copious bleeding and some days of rest restored him and we resumed our journey. This time the mule had a large rope tied around her neck, and we crossed the river without any accidents; we took a narrow path that led us by mountains, valleys, forests and prairies, following the course of the river Skarameep. Toward evening we were on the borders of a deep impetuous torrent, having no other bridge than a tree which was rather slight and in constant motion from the rushing of the waters. It reminded me of the bridge of souls spoken of in the Potawatomi legends. These savages believe that souls must traverse this bridge before they reach their elysium in the west. The good, they say, pass over it without danger; the bad, on the contrary, are unable to hold on, but stumble, stagger and fall into the torrent below, which sweeps them off into a labyrinth of lakes and marshes; here they drag out their existence; wretched, tormented by famine and in great agony, the living prey of all sorts of venomous reptiles and ferocious animals, wandering to and fro without ever being able to escape. We were fortunate enough to cross the trembling bridge without accident. We soon pitched our camp on the other side, and in spite of the warring waves which in falls and cascades thundered all night by our side, we enjoyed a refreshing sleep. The greater part of the next day the path conducted us through a thick and hilly forest of fir trees; the country then became more undulating and open. From time to time we perceived an Indian burial-ground, remarkable only for the posts erected on the graves, and hung with kettles, wooden plates, guns, bows and arrows, left there by the nearest relatives of the deceased — humble tokens of their grief and friendship.

We encamped on the shore of a small lake called the Skarameep,[4] where was a Skoyelpi village; I gave these savages several instructions and baptized their infants. In memory of my visit, they gave the name of Leêeyou Pierre

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[4] There is a small lake called Karamip on the map in this part of Washington. Father De Smet's movements would seem to point to Kettle lake and river, but the native name for the latter is given as Ne-hoi-al-pit-kwu.

(Father Peter) to an immense rocky mountain which dominates the whole region. At my departure the whole village accompanied me. The country over which we traveled is open; the soil sterile and sandy, and the different chains of mountains that traverse it seem to be nothing but sharp pointed rocks, thinly covered with cedars and pines. Toward evening we came up with the men of the first Okinagan encampment, who received us with the greatest cordiality and joy. The chief who came out to meet us was quite conspicuous, being arrayed in his court dress — a shirt made of a horse-skin, the hair of which was outside, the mane partly on his chest and back, giving him a truly fantastic and savage appearance. The camp also joined us, and the fact of my arrival having been soon noised abroad in every direction, we saw, issuing from the defiles and narrow passes of the mountains, bands of Indians who had gone forth to gather their harvest of roots. Many sick were presented to me for baptism, of which rite they already knew the importance.

Before reaching the rendezvous assigned us, on the borders of the Okinagan lake, I was surrounded by more than 200 horsemen, and more than 200 others were already in waiting. We recited together night prayers, and all listened with edifying attention to the instruction I gave them. The interpreter and Martin continued the religious conversation until the night was far advanced; they manifested the same anxiety to hear the word of God that the Cœur d'Alènes had shown. All the next day was spent in prayer, instructions and hymns — I baptized 106 children and some old people, and in conclusion named the plain where these consoling scenes occurred, the "Plain of Prayer." It would be impossible for me to give you an idea of the piety, the happiness of these men, who are thirsting for the life-living waters of the divine word. How much good a missionary could do, who would reside in the midst of a people who are so desirous of receiving instruction, and correspond so faithfully with the grace of God. After some regulations and advice, I left this interesting people, and pursuing my journey for three days over mountains and through dense forests, arrived safely at Fort Colville.

Amongst the innumerable rivers that traverse the American continent, and afford means of communication between its most distant portions, the Columbia river is one of the most remarkable, not only on account of its great importance, west of the mountains, but also from the dangers that attend its navigation. At some distance from the Pacific Ocean, crossing a territory which exhibits, in several localities, evident marks of former volcanic eruptions, its course is frequently impeded by rapids, by chains of volcanic rocks, and immense detached masses of the same substance which, in many places, obstruct the bed of the river.

I embarked on this river, on the 30th of May, in one of the barges of the Hudson Bay Company; Mr. Ogden,[8] one of the principal proprietors, offered me a place in his. I shall never forget the kindness and friendly manner with which this gentleman treated me throughout the journey, nor the many agreeable hours I spent in his company. I found his conversation instructive, his anecdotes and *bon mots* entertaining and timely; it was with great regret that I parted from him.

I will not detain you with a description of the rapids, falls and cascades, which I saw on this celebrated river; for from its source in the mountains to the cascades it is but a succession of dangers. I will endeavor, however, to give you some idea of one of its largest rapids, called by the Canadian voyageurs the Great Dalles. A dalle is a place where the current is confined to a channel between two steep rocks, forming a prolonged narrow torrent, but of extraordinary force and swiftness. Here the river is divided into several channels separated from one another by masses of rocks, which rise abruptly above its surface. Some of these channels are navigable at certain seasons of the year, although with very great risk, even to the most experienced pilot. But when, after the melting of the snow, the river rises above its usual level, the waters in most of these channels make but one body, and the whole mass of these united streams descends with irresistible fury. At this season the most courageous dare not encounter such dangers, and all navigation is discontinued. In this state the river flows with an imposing grandeur and majesty, which no language can describe. It seems at one moment to stay its progress; then leaps forward with resistless impetuosity, and then rebounds against the rock-girt islands of which I have already spoken, but which present only vain obstructions to its headlong course. If arrested for a moment, its accumulated waters proudly swell and mount as though instinct with life, and the next moment dash triumphantly on, enveloping the half smothered waves that preceded them as if impatient of their sluggish course, and wild to speed them on their way.

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[8] Peter Skeen Ogden, son of Chief Justice Ogden of Quebec, formerly a Tory resident of New York. Served successively with Astor, the Northwest Company and the Hudson Bay Company; discoverer of Humboldt river; died at Oregon City in 1854, at the age of sixty.

Along the shore, on every projecting point, the Indian fisherman takes his stand, spreading in the eddies his ingeniously worked net, and in a short time procures for himself an abundant supply of fine fish. Attracted by the shoals of fish that come up the river, the seals gambol amid the eddying waves — now floating with their heads above the river's breast, and anon darting in the twinkling of an eye from side to side, in sportive joy, or in swift pursuit of their scaly prey.

But this noble river has far other recollections associated with it. Never shall I forget the sad and fatal accident which occurred on the second day of our voyage, at a spot called the "Little Dalles."[4] I had gone ashore and was walking along the bank, scarcely thinking what might happen; for my breviary, papers, bed, in a word, my little all, had been left in the barge. I had proceeded about a quarter of a mile, when seeing the bargemen push off from the bank and glide down the stream with an easy, careless air, I began to repent having preferred a path along the river's side, so strewn with fragments of rocks that I was compelled at every instant to turn aside or clamber over them. I still held on my course, when all at once the barge is so abruptly stopped that the rowers can hardly keep their seats. Regaining, however, their equilibrium, they ply the oars with redoubled vigor, but without any effect upon the barge. They are already within the power of the angry vortex; the waters are crested with foam; a deep sound is heard which I distinguish as the voice of the pilot encouraging his men to hold to their oars — to row bravely. The danger increases every minute, and in a moment more all hope of safety has vanished. The barge, the sport of the vortex, spins like a top upon the whirling waters — the oars are useless — the bow rises — the stern descends, and the next instant all have disappeared. A death-like chill shot through my frame — a dimness came over my sight, as the cry "we are lost!" rang in my ears, and told but too plainly that my companions were buried beneath the waves. Overwhelmed with grief and utterly unable to afford them the slightest assistance, I stood a motionless spectator of this tragic scene. All were gone, and yet upon the river's breast there was not the faintest trace of their melancholy fate. Soon after the whirlpool threw up, in various directions, the oars, poles, the capsized barge, and every lighter article it had contained. Here and there I beheld the unhappy bargemen vainly struggling in the midst of the vortex. Five of them sank never to rise again. My interpreter had twice touched bottom and after a short prayer was thrown upon the bank. An Iroquois saved himself by means of my bed; and a third was so fortunate as to seize the handle of an empty trunk, which helped him to sustain himself above water until he reached land.

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[4] "When near the Okinagan Dalles, on being told by the boatman that the pass was a bad one, he requested to be put on shore. A little while after, the boat was engulfed in a whirlpool and, with the exception of the Father's interpreter and another man who escaped, all on board perished."—*Palladino.*

The rest of our journey was more fortunate. We stopped at Forts Okinagan[7] and Walla Walla,[8] where I baptized several children.

The savages who principally frequent the borders of the Columbia river are from the lakes; the chief of whom, with several of the nation, have been baptized; also the Skoyelpi or Chaudières, the Okinagans, Cinqpoils, Walla Wallas, Pierced Noses, Cayuses, Attayes, Spokans, the Indians from the falls and cascades, and the Chinooks and Clatsops.

We arrived at Fort Vancouver[9] on the morning of the 8th of June. I enjoyed the happiness and great consolation of meeting in these distant parts two respectable Canadian priests — the Reverend Mr. Blanchet, grand vicar of all the countries west of the mountains claimed by the British crown, and the Reverend Mr. Demers.[10] They are laboring in these regions for the same object that we are trying to accomplish in the Rocky Mountains. The kindness and benevolence with which these reverend gentlemen received me are proofs of the pure zeal which actuates them for the salvation of these savages. They assured me that immense good might be done in the extensive regions that border on the Pacific, if a greater number of missionaries, with means at their command, were stationed in these regions; and they urged me very strongly to obtain from my superiors some of our Fathers. I will try to give you in my next some extracts from the letters of these missionaries, which will make the country known to you, its extent, and the progress of their mission.

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[7] See note page 553.

[8] A Northwest Company trading post, built in 1818 by Donald McKenzie; first called Fort Nez Percé; burned in 1842 and rebuilt the year following of adobe; abandoned in 1855. The later military post and the present city, both of the same name, were located in the vicinity, though not upon the site of the old fort.

[9] "The metropolitan establishment of the Hudson Bay Company on the Pacific between the years 1825, when it was begun, and 1847, when the headquarters of the company were removed to Victoria."—*Bancroft.* The fort consisted of an inclosure 750 by 500 feet, surrounded by a palisade over twenty feet in height, within which were some forty buildings, including a Catholic chapel. There was a village of sixty houses adjacent, and a farm some nine square miles in extent, 1,500 acres or over being in cultivation.

The Governor of the honorable Company of Hudson Bay, Dr. McLoughlin, who resides at Fort Vancouver, after having given me every possible proof of interest, as a good Catholic, advised me to do everything in my power to gratify the wishes of the Canadian missionaries. His principal reason is, that if Catholicity was rapidly planted in these tracts where civilization begins to dawn, it would be more quickly introduced thence into the interior. Already a host of ministers have overrun a part of the country, and have settled wherever they may derive some advantages for the privations their philanthropy imposes on them. Such is the state of these regions of the new world, as yet so little known: you perceive that our prospects are by no means discouraging. Permit me therefore to repeat the great principle you have so often recommended to me, and which I have not forgotten: "Courage and confidence in God!" With the mercy of God, the Church of Jesus Christ may soon have the consolation of seeing her standard planted in these distant lands on the ruins of idolatry and of the darkest superstition. Pray then that the Lord of such a rich harvest may send us numerous fellow laborers; for in so extensive a field we are but five, and beset with so many dangers, that at the dawn of day we have often reason to doubt whether we will live to see the sun go down. It is not that we have anything to fear from the climate; far from it — for, if here death came only by sickness, we might indeed count upon many years, but water, fire, and the bow, often hurry their victims off when least expected. Of 100 men who inhabit this country, there are not ten who do not die by some or other fatal accident.

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[10] "'A scene here ensued so affecting and so edifying,' writes Archbishop Seghers, 'that it drew tears from the eyes of the only witness present, Father Demers, from whose lips we received the moving narrative. No sooner had Father De Smet descried the Vicar General than he ran to prostrate himself at his feet, imploring his blessing; and no sooner had the Very Reverend Blanchet caught sight of the valiant missionary than he also fell on his knees, imploring the blessing of the saintly Jesuit. Admirable struggle, where the last place, not the first, was the object of the contestants.'"—*Palladino.* Blanchet and Demers came to Oregon from Canada in 1838.

The afternoon of the 30th of June I resumed my place in one of the barges of the English Company, and took my leave of the worthy and respectable Governor.[11] To my great joy I found that the Reverend Mr. Demers was one of the passengers, being about to undertake an apostolic excursion among the different tribes of New Caledonia, who, according to the accounts of several Canadian travelers, were most anxious to see a Black-gown and hear the word of God. The wind being favorable, the sails of the barge were unfurled, and the sailors plying their oars at the same time, the 11th of July saw us landed safely at Fort Walla Walla. The next day I parted, with many regrets, from my esteemed friends, Reverend Mr. Demers, and Mr. Ogden. Accompanied only by my interpreter, we continued our land route to the 19th, through woods and immense plains. The high plains which separate the waters of the Snake river from those of the Spokan, offer some natural curiosities. I fancied myself in the vicinity of several fortified cities, surrounded by walls and small forts, scattered in different directions. The pillars are regular pentagons, from two to four feet in diameter, erect, joined together, forming a wall from forty to eighty feet high, and extending several miles in the form of squares and triangles, detached from one another, and in different directions.

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[11] Father De Smet, during his sojourn on the lower Columbia, made a journey up the Willamette to St. Paul Mission, the residence of Reverend Blanchet. This was a short distance above the Falls of the Willamette.

On our road we met some Nez Percés, and a small band of Spokans, who accosted us with many demonstrations of friendship, and although very poor, offered us more salmon than we could carry. The Pointed Hearts (a tribe which shall ever be dear to me) came to meet us, and great was the joy on both sides, on beholding one another again. They had strictly observed all the rules I had laid down for them at my first visit. They accompanied me for three days, to the very limits of their territory. We then planted a cross on the summit of a high mountain, covered with snow, and after the example of the Flatheads, all the people consecrated themselves inviolably to the service of God. We remained there that night. The next morning, after reciting our prayers in common, and giving them a long exhortation, we bade them farewell.

The 20th I continued my journey over terrific mountains, steep rocks, and through apparently impenetrable forests. I could scarcely believe that any human being had ever preceded us over such a road. At the end of four days' journey, replete with fatigue and difficulties, we reached the borders of the Bitter Root river, and on the evening of July 27th I had the happiness of arriving safely at St. Mary's, and of finding my dear brethren in good health.

The Flatheads, accompanied by Father Point, had left the village ten days before, to procure provisions. A few had remained to guard the camp, and their families awaited my return. The 29th, I started to rejoin the Flatheads on the Missouri river. We ascended the Bitter Root to its source, and the 1st of August, having clambered up a high mountain, we planted a cross on its very summit, near a beautiful spring, one of the sources of the Missouri. The next day, after a forced march, we joined the camp, where we had such a budget of news to open, so many interesting facts to communicate to each other, that we sat up a greater part of the night. The Reverend Father Point and myself accompanied our dear neophytes, who to obtain their daily bread are obliged to hunt the buffalo even over the lands of their most inveterate enemies, the Blackfeet. On the 15th of August, the feast of the Assumption, (the same on which this letter is dated) I offered up the sacrific of the mass in a noble plain, watered by one of the three streams that form the head waters of the Missouri, to thank God for all the blessings he had bestowed on us during this last year. I had the consolation of seeing fifty Flatheads approach the holy table in so humble, modest and devout a manner, that to my perhaps partial eye, they resembled angels more than men. On the same day I determined, for the interest of this mission, which seems so absolutely to require it, to traverse for the fourth time the dangerous American desert. If heaven preserves me, (for I have to travel through a region infested by thousands of hostile savages) I will send you the account of this last journey.

You see then, Reverend Father, that in these deserts we must more than ever keep our souls prepared to render the fearful account, in consequence of the perils that surround us; and as it would be desirable that we could be replaced immediately, in case of any accident occurring — again I say to you, pray that the Lord may send us fellow laborers. "*Rogate ergo Dominum messis ut mittat operarios in messem suam.*" And thousands of souls, who would otherwise be lost, will bless you one day in eternity. Reverend Father Point has expressed a desire to be sent amongst the Blackfeet. Until they are willing to listen to the word of God, which I think will be before long, he intends to preach the gospel to the Pointed Hearts and the neighboring tribes. I trust we shall be able to make as cheering a report of these as we have already done of our first neophytes. I have found them all in the best dispositions. The Reverend Father Mengarini remains with the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles.

On my first journey, in the autumn of 1841, which ended at Fort Colville, I baptized 190 persons of the Kalispel tribe. On my visit, last spring, to the various distant tribes, (of which I have just finished giving you the account) I had the consolation of baptizing 418 persons, 60 of whom were of the Pend d'Oreille tribe of the great lake; 82 of the Kootenais or Skalzi; 100 of the Pointed Hearts; 56 of the Skoyelpi; 106 of the Okinagans, and 14 in the Okinagan and Walla Walla Forts.—These, with 500 baptized last year, in different parts of the country, mostly amongst the Flatheads and Kalispels, and 196 that I baptized on Christmas day, at St. Mary's, with the 350 baptized by Reverend Fathers Mengarini and Point, make a total of 1,654 souls, wrested from the power of the devil. For what the scripture calls the "spirit of the world" has not wherewith to introduce itself amongst them. These poor people find their happiness even in this world in the constant practice of their Christian duties. We may almost say of them, that all who are baptized are saved.—Since God has inspired you with a zealous desire to second the views of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, entreat those pious persons to whom you may communicate your designs, to redouble their prayers in our behalf. I conclude by beseeching you earnestly to remember me frequently and fervently in the holy sacrifice.

CHAPTER XI.

RETURN TO ST. LOUIS IN FALL OF 1842.[1]

Safely through Blackfoot country — Agreeable visit with the Crows — They make moral resolves — Continues journey with small escort — Through the dark and bloody ground — Routine of travel — Bill of fare — Meets a steamboat — Perils of Upper River navigation — Safe arrival at St. Louis.

IN my last letter of August, I promised to write to you from St. Louis, should I arrive safely in that city. Heaven has preserved me, and here I am about to fulfil my promise. Leaving Reverend Father Point and the Flathead camp on the river Madison, I was accompanied by twelve[2] of our Indians. We traveled in three days a distance of 150 miles, crossing two chains of mountains, in a section of country frequently visited by the Blackfeet warriors, without, however, meeting with any of these scalping savages. At the mouth of the Twenty-five Yard river, a branch of the Yellowstone, we found 250 huts, belonging to several nations, all friendly to us — the Flatheads, Kalispels, Nez Percés, Cayuses, and Snakes. I spent three days amongst them to exhort them to perseverance, and to make some preparations for my long journey. The day of my departure, ten neophytes presented themselves at my lodge to serve as my escort, and to introduce me to the Crow tribe.

On the evening of the second day we were in the midst of this large and interesting tribe. The Crows had perceived us from a distance; as we approached, some of them recognized me, and at the cry of "the Black-robe! the Black-robe!" the Crows, young and old, to the number of 3,000, came out of their wigwams.

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[1] This chapter consists of Letter XVI, *Letters and Sketches* and the last letter (XII) *Voyages aux M.-R.* It was written at the University of St. Louis and sent in English to a Father of the Society, November 1, 1842, and to Father De Smet's brother Francis two days later. The English text is here followed where practicable.

[2] Fr. six.

On entering the village, a comical scene occurred, of which they suddenly made me the principal personage. All the chiefs and about fifty of their warriors hastened around me, and I was literally assailed by them. Holding me by the gown, they drew me in every direction, whilst a robust savage of gigantic stature seemed resolved to carry me off by main force. All spoke at the same time, and appeared to be quarreling, whilst I, the sole object of all this contention, could not conceive what they were about. I remained passive, not knowing whether I should laugh or be serious. The interpreter soon came to my relief, and said that all this uproar was but an excess of politeness and kindness toward me, as every one wished to have the honor of lodging and entertaining the Black-gown. With his advice I selected my host, upon which the others immediately loosed their hold, and I followed the chief to his lodge, which was the largest and best in the camp. The Crows did not tarry long before they all gathered around me and loaded me with marks of kindness. The social calumet, emblem of savage brotherhood and union, went round that evening so frequently that it was scarcely ever extinguished. It was accompanied with all the antics for which the Crows are so famous, when they offer the calumet to the Great Spirit, to the four winds, to the sun, fire, earth and water.

These Indians are unquestionably the most anxious to learn; the most inquisitive, ingenious, and polished of all the savage tribes east of the mountains. They profess great friendship and admiration for the whites. They asked me innumerable questions; among others, they wished to know the number of the whites. "Count," I replied, "the blades of grass upon your immense plains, and you will know pretty nearly the number of the whites." They all smiled, saying that the thing was impossible, but they understood my meaning. And when I explained to them the vast extent of the "villages" inhabited by white men (New York, Philadelphia, London, Paris), the grand lodges (houses) built as near each other as the fingers of my hand, and four or five piled up, one above the other — (meaning the different stories of our dwellings); when I told them that some of these lodges (speaking of churches and towers) were as high as mountains, and large enough to contain all the Crows together; that in the grand lodge of the national council (the Capitol at Washington) all the great chiefs of the whole world could smoke the calumet at their ease; that the roads in these great villages were always filled with passengers, who came and went more thickly than the vast herds of buffaloes that sometimes cover their beautiful plains; when I explained to them the extraordinary celerity of those moving lodges (the cars on the railroad) that leave far behind them the swiftest horse, and which are drawn along by frightful machines, whose repeated groanings re-echo far and wide, as they belch forth immense volumes of fire and smoke; and next, those fire canoes (steamboats), which transport whole villages, with provisions, arms and baggage, in a few days, from one country to another, crossing large lakes, (the seas) ascending and descending the great rivers and streams; when I told them that I had seen white men mounting up into the air (in balloons) and flying with as much agility as the warrior eagle of their mountains, then their astonishment was at its height; and all placing their hands upon their mouths, sent forth at the same time, one general cry of wonder. "The Master of Life is great," said the chief, "and the white men are his favorites."

But what appeared to interest them more than aught else, was prayer (religion); to this subject they listened with the strictest undivided attention. They told me that they had already heard of it, and they knew that this prayer made men good and wise on earth, and insured their happiness in the future life. They begged me to permit the whole camp to assemble, that they might hear for themselves the words of the Great Spirit, of whom they had been told such wonders. Immediately three United States flags were erected on the field, in the midst of the camp, and 3,000 savages, including the sick, who were carried in skins, gathered around me. I knelt beneath the banner of our country, my ten Flathead neophytes by my side, and surrounded by this multitude, eager to hear the glad tidings of the gospel of peace. We began by intoning two canticles, after which I recited all the prayers, which we interpreted to them: then again we sang canticles, and I finished by explaining to them the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments. They all appeared to be filled with joy, and declared it was the happiest day of their lives. They begged me to have pity on them — to remain among them and instruct them and their little children in the knowledge, love and service of the Great Spirit. I promised that a Blackgown should visit them, but on condition that the chiefs would engage themselves to put a stop to the thievish practices so common amongst them, and to oppose vigorously the corrupt morals of their tribe. Believing me to be endowed with supernatural powers, they had entreated me from the very commencement of our conversation to free them from the sickness that then desolated the camp, and to supply them with plenty. I repeated to them on this occasion that the Great Spirit alone could remove these evils — God, I said, listens to the supplications of the good and pure of heart; of those who detest their sins, and wish to devote themselves to his service — but he shuts his ear to the prayers of those who violate his holy law. In his anger, God had destroyed by fire five infamous "villages" (Sodom, Gomorrah, etc.) in consequence of their horrid abominations — that the Crows walked in the ways of these wicked men, consequently they could not complain if the Great Spirit seemed to punish them by sickness, war and famine. They were themselves the authors of all their calamities — and if they did not change their mode of life very soon, they might expect to see their misfortunes increase from day to day — while the most awful torments awaited them and all wicked men after their death. I assured them in fine that heaven would be the reward of those who would repent of their evil deeds and practice the religion of the Great Spirit.

The grand orator of the camp was the first to reply: "Black-gown," said he, "I understand you. You have said what is true. Your words have passed from my ears into my heart — I wish all could comprehend them." Whereon, addressing himself to the Crows, he repeated forcibly, "Yes, Crows, the Black-gown has said what is true. We are dogs, for we live like dogs. Let us change our lives and our children will live." I then held long conferences with all the chiefs assembled in council. I proposed to them the example of the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles, whose chiefs made it their duty to exhort their people to the practice of virtue, and who knew how to punish as they deserved all the prevarications against God's holy law. They promised to follow my advice, and assured me that I would find them in better dispositions on my return. I flatter myself with the hope that this visit, the good example of my neophytes, but principally the prayers of the Flatheads, will gradually produce a favorable change among the Crows. A good point in their character, and one that inspires me with almost the certainty of their amendment, is that they have hitherto resisted courageously all attempts to introduce spirituous liquors among them. "For what is this fire-water good?" said the chief to a white man who tried to bring it into their country, "it burns the throat and stomach; it makes a man like a bear who has lost his senses. He bites, he growls, he scratches and he howls, he falls down as if he were dead. Your fire-water does nothing but harm — take it to our enemies, and they will kill each other, and their wives and children will be worthy of pity. As for us we do not want it, we are fools enough without it."

A very touching scene occurred during the council. Several of the savages wished to examine my missionary cross; I thence took occasion to explain to them the sufferings of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and the cause of his death on the cross — I then placed my cross in the hands of the great chief; he kissed it in the most respectful manner; raising his eyes to heaven, and pressing the cross with both his hands to his heart, he exclaimed, "O Great Spirit, take pity on me and be merciful to thy poor children." And his people followed his example.[8]

I was in the village of the Crows when news was brought that two of their most distinguished warriors had fallen victims to the rage and cruelty of the Blackfeet. The heralds or orators went round the camp, proclaiming in a loud voice the circumstances of the combat and the tragic end of the two brave men. A gloomy silence prevailed everywhere, only interrupted by a band of mourners, whose appearance alone was enough to make the most insensible heart bleed, and rouse to vengeance the entire nation. This band was composed of the mothers of the two unfortunate warriors who had fallen, their wives carrying their newborn infants in their arms, their sisters, and all their little children. The unhappy creatures had their heads shaven and cut in every direction; they were gashed with numerous wounds, whence the blood constantly trickled. In this pitiable state they rent the air with their lamentations and cries, imploring the warriors of their nation to have compassion on them — to have compassion on their desolate children — to grant them one last favor, the only cure for their affliction, and that was, to go at once and inflict signal vengeance on the murderers. They led by the bridle all the horses that belonged to the deceased. A Crow chief mounting immediately the best of these steeds, brandished his tomahawk in the air, proclaiming that he was ready to avenge the deed. Several young men rallied about him.

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[8] This, and Father De Smet's previous visit to the Crows in 1840 (see p. 239) appear to have been the only advances made to them by Catholic priests until the year 1880.

They sang together the war-song, and started the same day, declaring that they would not return empty-handed (viz: without scalps).

On these occasions the near relations of the one who has fallen distribute everything that they possess, retaining nothing but some old rags wherewith to clothe themselves. The mourning ceases as soon as the deed is avenged. The warriors cast at the feet of the widows and orphans the trophies torn away from the enemies. Then passing from extreme grief to exultation, they cast aside their tattered garments, wash their bodies, besmear themselves with all sorts of colors, deck themselves off in their best robes, and with the scalps affixed to the end of poles, march in triumph round the camp, shouting and dancing, accompanied at the same time by the whole village.

On the 25th I bade adieu to my faithful companions, the Flatheads, and the Crows. Accompanied by the Iroquois Ignatius, a Cree half-breed named Gabriel, and by two brave Americans, who, although Protestants, wished to serve as guides to a Catholic missionary, I once more plunged into the arid plains of the Yellowstone. Having already described this region, I have nothing new to add concerning it. This desert is undoubtedly dangerous, and has been the scene of more tragic deeds, combats, stratagems and savage cruelties, than any other region. At each step, the Crow interpreter, Mr. V. C., who had sojourned eleven years in the country, recounted different transactions; pointing, meanwhile, to the spots where they had occurred, which, in our situation, made our blood run cold, and our hair stand erect. It is the battle-ground where the Crows, the Blackfeet, Sioux, Cheyennes, Assiniboins, Aricaras, and Minnetarees, fight out their interminable quarrels, avenging and revenging, without respite, their mutual wrongs.

After six days' march, we found ourselves upon the very spot where a combat had recently taken place. The bloody remains of ten Assiniboins who had been slain were scattered here and there — almost all the flesh eaten off by the wolves and carnivorous birds. At the sight of these mangled limbs — of the vultures that soared above our heads, after having satiated themselves with the unclean repast, and the region round me, which had so lately resounded with the savage cries of more savage men, engaged in mutual carnage — I own that the little courage I thought I possessed seemed to fail me entirely, and give place to a secret terror, which I sought in vain to stifle or conceal from my companions. We observed in several places the fresh tracks of men and horses, leaving no doubt in our minds as to the proximity of hostile parties; our guide even assured me that he thought we were already discovered, but by continuing our precautions he hoped we might perhaps elude their craftiness and malicious designs, for the savages very seldom make their attacks in open day.

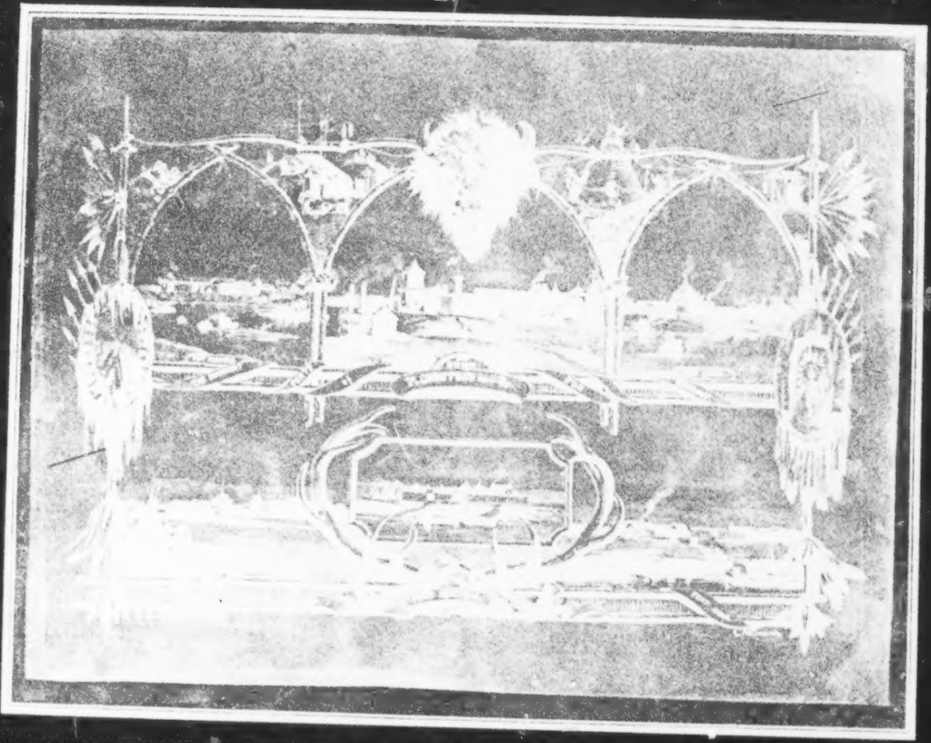
The following is the description of our regular march until the 10th of September. At daybreak we saddled our horses and pursued our journey; at 10 o'clock we breakfasted in a suitable place, that would offer some advantage in case of an attack. After an hour and a half or two hours' rest, we resumed our march a second time, always trotting our horses, until sunset, when we unsaddled them to dine and sup; we then lighted a good fire, hastily raised a little cabin of branches, to induce our ever watchful foes, in case they pursued us, to suppose that we had encamped for the night; for as soon as the inimical videttes discover anything of the kind, they make it known by a signal to the whole party. They then immediately assemble and concert the plan of attack. In the meantime, favored by the darkness, we pursued our journey quietly until ten or twelve o'clock at night, and then, without fire or even shelter, each one disposed himself as well as he might, for sleep. It appears to me that I hear you ask: But what did you eat for your breakfast and supper? Examine the notes of my journal, and you will acknowledge that our fare was such as would excite the envy of the most fastidious gastronome. From the 25th of August to the 10th of September, 1842, we killed, to supply our wants, as we journeyed on, three fine buffalo cows and two large bulls (only to obtain the tongue and marrow bones); two large deer, as fat as we could have wished; three goats, two black-tail deer, a bighorn or mountain sheep, two fine grey bears, and a swan — to say nothing of the pheasants, fowls, snipe, ducks and geese. In the midst of so much game, we scarcely felt the want of bread, sugar or coffee. Humps, tongues and ribs replaced these. And the bed? It is soon arranged. We were in a country where you waste no time in taking off your shoes; you wrap your buffalo robe around you, the saddle serves as a pillow, and thanks to the fatigues of a long journey of about forty miles under a burning sun, you have scarcely laid your head upon it before you are asleep.

The American gentlemen who carry on the Assiniboin fur trade at Fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellowstone, received me with great politeness and kindness. I rested there during three days. A journey so long and continuous, through regions where the drought had been so great that every sign of vegetation had disappeared, had very much exhausted our poor horses. The 1,800 miles that we had yet to travel were not to be undertaken lightly. After having well considered everything, I resolved to leave my horses at the fort, and to trust myself to the impetuous waters of the Missouri in a skiff, accompanied by Ignatius and Gabriel. The result was most fortunate, for on the third day of our descent, to our great surprise and joy, we heard the puffing of a steamboat. It was a real God-send to us; accordingly, our first thought was to thank God, in all the sincerity of our hearts. We soon beheld her majestically ascending the stream. It was the first boat that had ever attempted to ascend the river in that season of the year, laden with merchandise for the Fur Company. Four gentlemen from New York, proprietors of the boat, invited me to enter and remain on board. I accepted with unfeigned gratitude their kind offer of hospitality; the more so, as they assured me that several war-parties were lying in ambush along the river. On entering the boat I was an object of great curiosity — my black gown, my missionary cross, my long hair, attracted attention. I had thousands of questions to answer and many long stories to relate about my journey.

I have but a few words to add. I baptized some fifty little ones, principally in the forts. The waters were low, the sand-banks and snags everywhere numerous; the boat consequently encountered many obstacles in her passage. We were frequently in great danger of perishing. Her keel was pierced by pointed rocks, her sides rent by the snags. Twenty times the wheels had been broken to pieces. The pilot's house had been carried away in the tempest; the whole cabin would have followed if it had not been made fast by a large cable. Our boat appeared to be little more than a mere wreck, and in this wreck, after forty-six days' navigation from the Yellowstone, we arrived safely at St. Louis.

On the last Sunday of October, at twelve o'clock, I was kneeling at the foot of St. Mary's Altar, in the Cathedral, offering up my thanksgiving to God for the signal protection he had extended to his poor, unworthy servant. From the beginning of April I had traveled 5,000 miles. I had descended and ascended the dangerous Columbia river. I had seen five of my companions perish in one of those life-destroying whirlpools, so justly dreaded by those who navigate that stream. I had traversed the Willamette, crossed the Rocky Mountains, passed through the country of the Blackfeet, the desert of the Yellowstone, and descended the Missouri; and in all these journeys I had not received the slightest injury. *"Dominus memor fuit nostri et benedixit nobis."*

Life, Letters and Travels of Father De Smet among the North American Indians.



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LIFE, LETTERS AND TRAVELS

OF

FATHER PIERRE-JEAN DE SMET, S. J.

1801-1878

Missionary Labors and Adventures among the Wild Tribes of the
North American Indians, Embracing Minute Description of Their
Manners, Customs, Games, Modes of Warfare and Torture,
Legends, Tradition, etc., All from Personal Observations
Made during Many Thousand Miles of Travel,
with Sketches of the Country from St. Louis
to Puget Sound and the Altrabasca

Edited from the original unpublished manuscript Journals
and Letter Books and from his Printed Works with
Historical, Geographical, Ethnological and other Notes;
Also a Life of Father De Smet

MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

HIRAM MARTIN CHITTENDEN
Major, Corps of Engineers, U. S. A.

AND

ALFRED TALBOT RICHARDSON

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THE OREGON MISSIONS.

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1843.

FOR the purpose of soliciting funds for the missions, Father De Smet made a journey to New Orleans and back and as far east as Boston and back — He then went to Westport, Mo., with Father De Vos and companions — Then left St. Louis for Europe — Embarked at New York (fourth voyage across the Atlantic)— In twenty-one days landed in Ireland — Visited Cork and Dublin — Crossed to Liverpool and London — Continued on to Antwerp — Visited the principal cities in Belgium, France, Italy and Holland — Embarked at Antwerp with a father and a brother from Belgium, three Italian fathers, and six sisters of Notre Dame de Namur — Descended the Scheld to Flushing, where he was detained twenty-eight days by contrary winds.

No dates given.

Distance traveled, 15,479 miles.

1844.

Sailed January 9th with a favoring breeze (fifth voyage) — Crossed the Equator February 14th — Saw the Falkland Islands on the 16th of March — Rounded Cape Horn on the 20th — Continued north ten days when a terrible tempest was encountered which drove the ship almost upon the coast of Patagonia, but veered south in time to prevent wreck — Ship driven south to the 66th degree south latitude among the icebergs — A favorable wind then brought the ship back to the coast of Chile in sight of the Cape of Tres Montes April 8th — Entered Valparaiso harbor April 11th — Made a journey to Santiago, arriving there April 25th — Returned and left Valparaiso May 3d — Arrived in Callao May 10th — Visited Lima, the capital of Peru — Sailed from Callao May 27th — Recrossed the Equator in June and sighted the coast of Oregon July 28th — Crossed the bar July 31st and anchored in front of Astoria.

August 2d set out by skiff for Vancouver arriving there on the 4th — Started for the Willamette August 14th; reached St. Paul's on the 17th and commenced the erection of St. Francis Xavier's residence — Was taken quite ill, and before he was entirely recovered, set out on horseback for the upper country — Traveled along the base of Mt. Hood, past the Dalles, and across Des Chutes and John Day rivers to Walla Walla — Crossed the Spokan Desert and went to the Sacred Heart residence among the Cœur d'Alènes west of Cœur d'Alène lake — Thence went to the Kalispel Bay and commenced the Mission of St. Ignatius — Thence to Fort Colville in quest of provisions whence he returned to the Bay and passed the winter among the Pend d'Oreilles.

Distance traveled, 18,828 miles.

1845.

In the beginning of February, five feet of snow on the ground, Father De Smet set out by canoe up Clark's Fork and visited St. Mary's Mission among the Flatheads — Returned to the Bay, fixed on site for the new establishment, felled the first tree for the buildings and then set out for Walla Walla and Vancouver — Thence up the Willamette to St. Francis Xavier — Set out for the upper country with eleven horses laden with implements of various kinds — Traveled via Mt. Hood and Fort Walla Walla — Thence across the desert to the Bay July 15th — Established two stations: St. Paul at Kettle Falls and St. Francis Regis at Lake De Boey —

August 9th Father De Smet set out for the Blackfoot country via the upper Columbia — He went to Lake Pend d'Oreille by canoe — Thence crossed the country through thick forests to the Kootenai river, called by him Flatbow or McGillivray river — Met the Kootenai Indians — Ascended the Kootenai to where it comes close to the source of the Columbia — Crossed over to the Columbia September 4th — Descended the Columbia past a number of lakes near its source — Recrossed the dividing ridge to the Kootenai near the mouth of the Vermillion river — Ascended this tributary to its source in the Continental Divide — Crossed to the headwaters of the south fork of the Saskatchewan September 15th — Traveled through dense forests and a rugged mountainous country to the Rocky Mountain House on the North Fork October 4th — Met a small band of Blackfeet here — Set out on a long expedition to the south in search of the main Blackfoot band but could not find it, on account of heavy snowfalls which destroyed the trail — After three weeks of intense suffering, returned to Rocky Mountain House, and went thence to Fort Augustus on the Saskatchewan, arriving there December 31st.

Distance traveled, 3,480 miles.

1846.

Father De Smet spent the winter at Fort Augustus making one excursion to Lake St. Anne and St. Anne Mission — March 12th he set out for Fort Assiniboin on the Athabasca on a sled drawn by four dogs — Arrived at Fort Assiniboin on the 18th — Ascended the river on the ice to Fort Jasper — Provisions being scarce, nearly the whole population of the post went to the Lake of Islands where game and fish were more plentiful and remained until April 25th — Father De Smet then started on his return journey — Ascended the Athabasca to a tributary, Trou or Hole river, and followed this nearly to its source in the pass over the divide at the foot of the Great Glacier — Here (May 1st) they encamped to await the arrival of the annual brigade of the Hudson Bay Company from the Columbia — About May 6th started across the mountains on snowshoes — Descended to the Columbia at the mouth of Canoe river amid the greatest hardship and suffering, to which Father De Smet declares that he would surely have succumbed if it had not been for the aid of a small band of Indians that he encountered.

May 10th left Boat Encampment in a skiff and descended the Columbia — Arrived at Fort Colville "toward the end of the month" of May — Continued his journey in company with a Hudson Bay party and arrived in due time at Vancouver.

Father De Smet visited the establishments in the Willamette valley and then returned to Fort Vancouver where he procured supplies for the missions and started on his return to the mountains — Traveled via Fort Walla Walla and the Cœur d'Alène Mission and arrived at St. Mary's Mission, probably about August 10th.

"The expenses for the support of all our establishments had been great and it was thought necessary to send a Father to the States to provide for them. The Fathers unanimously expressed their desire that I undertake again this long and hazardous voyage." Left St. Mary's August 16th — Crossed the divide to Jefferson river — Traveled by way of the Three Forks and Bozeman Pass to the Yellowstone — Descended the Yellowstone to the mouth of the Big Horn about September 7th — Set out with Flatheads in northwest direction to find Blackfeet and conclude peace — Succeeded in accomplishing this in Judith Basin not far from Fort Lewis (later Fort Benton) — Proceeded with all the Indians to the fort.

September 28th Father De Smet set out in a skiff for St. Louis — Arrived at Fort Union October 11th; at Fort

Pierre on the 30th where he remained three days — On the 18th of November passed Cabanne's old trading post near where Omaha now stands and met Brigham Young there — Passed Westport on the 28th of November and reached St. Louis, by steamboat, about December 1st.

After a few days' rest Father De Smet went to New Orleans to see the Father Provincial who had gone thither.

Distance traveled, 6,510 miles.

CHAPTER I.

THE VOYAGE AROUND CAPE HORN[1] IN 1844.

Antwerp to Valparaiso.

They put to sea — They are seasick — They see strange fishes — They fear pirates — Pleasant weather — Neptune visits them and they are all merry — Celestial phenomena — Whales, icebergs and volcanic rocks — Tempest drives them toward coast — Arrival at Valparaiso — They go ashore for rest — The Fathers visit Santiago — Notes on the country — Climate and products.

ON the 9th of January, 1844, two masses were celebrated early in the morning on board the fine brig *Infatigable*, of Antwerp, lying in the mouth of the Schelde. The east wind which we[2] had been awaiting for twenty-eight days had sprung up the evening before, and invited us to enter the North Sea. We had in fact been waiting since eight in the evening for a Flushing pilot in order to start at two in the morning. He had not, however, come on board until sunrise, and then, to our captain's great displeasure, not in a very fit state to steer the vessel between the bars and the numerous craft that surrounded us. The whole morning we remained on deck, simple and sad spectators of the pleasing sight presented by the other ships, which were all getting under way around us, amid the singing of the sailors, who made the air resound with their sea-songs in various languages. We had the honor of receiving their salutes: the *Infatigable* was hoisting and dipping the national flag until all this floating forest had vacated Rammekens' Roads. By noon two ships were still in our way; one, commanded by De Cock, laden with goods and emigrants for Texas, weighed anchor and was moving favorably, when all at once it was caught by the current and its bow driven forcibly against our stern: this unexpected shock produced such a prolonged cracking that the two ships seemed to be breaking up, and the cries of distress of the Swiss and German emigrants added to the confusion. But after a few awkward moments their fright was lost sight of in the flood of language exchanged between the two crews, with that delicacy usual among sailors. The pilot of the other ship accused ours of being to blame, whereas he, poor innocent, had not so much as raised a sail. It was a rough-and-ready representation of the Wolf and the Lamb, only it turned out differently. A rail of our afterdeck was carried away and the shutter of a window demolished — the other had a plank stove in and his anchor broken. We were glad to have gotten off so easily.

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[1] This and the following chapter are here translated for the first time from Father De Smet's manuscript journal. The substance of the sea voyage was published as Letter I, *Western Missions and Missionaries*, in the form of a letter to the Provincial from Lima, May 26, 1844. The entry into the Columbia is described in *Missions de l'Orégon*, Letter I, thence translated as Letter II, *Oregon Missions:* but the manuscript account has been chosen for publication as being somewhat fuller.

[2] Fathers De Smet, John Nobili, Michael Accolti, Anthony Ravalli and Louis Vercruysse, Brother Francis Huybrechts and six sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame of Namur.

John Nobili was born in Rome in 1812. After six years of great hardships in the Oregon missions, he was transferred to California. In 1855 he was made rector of the College of Santa Clara, and he died on March 1st of the following year.

Father Ravalli died at St. Mary's on the Bitter Root, October 2, 1884, in his seventy-third year — "fifty years a Jesuit and forty years a missionary." His fame stands very high in Montana, where a later generation knew more of him than even of Father De Smet.

Louis or Aloys Vercruysse was born at Courtrai, Belgium, in 1806, and died there July 12, 1867. He was stationed for a time at St.

Toward three in the afternoon we put to sea. Like a

Ignatius Mission; was transferred to Santa Clara in California in 1863, and returned to his birthplace in 1865, his health having given way.

Brother Huybrechts died at the Cœur d'Alène Mission, April 5, 1872, at the age of seventy-four.

spirited steed, released after being long held in check, the *Infatigable* passed down the roads with a swift gait and a majestic air. Opposite Flushing, the Superior-General, Mother Constantine, and the superiors of Notre Dame and of the houses of Namur and Ghent, took the most touching farewells of the other sisters, several of whom melted in tears. At the close of the day the foreign pilot turned the helm over to ours and took his leave.

Thereupon we entered the North Sea, where all soon perceived the first symptoms of sea-sickness. At supper it declared itself positively. The feasters, with Father Louis [Vercruysse] at their head, were seen to rise briskly from the table, as if smitten by some sudden pang.[8] They advanced hesitatingly, the ship being now in full swing — imitating children learning to walk, or as the English *Log-book* puts it, stepping like little green parrots; clawing at benches, chairs and the shoulders of passengers who were better off, until they gained the door and clambered up the stair. Once on deck and feeling more at liberty, they all paid their tribute to Neptune, and each one made efforts to imitate, as far as was in his or her power, the exhaust of a steam-engine. "O misery! misery! who would have thought it?" murmured Father Louis in his anguish — and directly a second explosion took place, and he cried "Good-by to my supper! there go the tea, the biscuits, the cheese —" A third and fourth fit followed swiftly, as if the soul was about to quit this earthly abode — that was the case with poor Father Louis. His dinner, the Bordeaux wine, the beer — all cruelly bad-tasting in a second edition, mingled with bile — potatoes, cabbage, salt meat, chicken, ham and all the

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[8] Father Vercruysse, in his journal of this voyage, distinctly puts Father De Smet at the head of those overcome by sea-sickness on this occasion.— Father Vercruysse's journal is published in volume VI of the third Belgian edition of Father De Smet's writings. It is identical to a large extent with that here translated from Father De Smet's manuscript; it would appear that the two Fathers had kept a species of joint journal, or had copied reciprocally from each other.

etceteras — the several layers of his contents escaped one after another, like a mountain discharging through a crater, leaving him only a body entirely excavated. We congratulated him, for he was much better afterward.

The first night the wind was against us, so that the captain was on the point of heading for some English port. On the 10th we saw Calais light. We passed the strait on a very stormy night, and came near being thrown upon the coast of France. All this day the deck had the appearance of a hospital. A mournful silence reigned, broken only by occasional groans, or bursts of laughter provoked by the strange attitude taken by some individual, prone on the deck and reduced to extremity. The good sisters, though more or less inconvenienced themselves, displayed an astonishing activity to serve the sick. Their inexhaustible charity sufficed for everything.

Favored by a good breeze, we outstripped all the vessels that had raised anchor ahead of us on the 9th. Toward two in the afternoon an enormous fish appeared in sight — a little sample of the numerous whales, whose spouts were to divert us in the gloomy and dangerous region of the Antarctic Circle. On the 12th we observed the Isle of Wight. On the 13th we found ourselves near Plymouth, and after we had admired at night the lighthouse of the Lizard, the Atlantic Ocean received its guests, on the 14th of the month.

The motion of the ship was too violent to allow us to celebrate holy mass until the 18th. On that day we all had the happiness of receiving communion, and all met at dinner, for the first time since we had left the Schelde. On the 20th the Island of Madeira came in sight. This island was discovered in 1419, and called Madeira because it was covered with forests. The thermometer stood at 75° F. On the 20th a calm came upon us: the sea was like a mirror, and was wrinkled by a prodigious number of fish, among which the *souffleur* [grampus?] especially attracted our notice by the foam he raised in the water and the noise of his blowing. The fishes of Europe indicate by their forms the peaceable character of the peoples who inhabit those shores. At least so they say, and they offer as proof that the salmon, trout, carp and an infinite number of other finny peoples who visit the neighborhood of mankind, are honorable in their shape and very respectable in their appearance. But if you are fond of the marvelous in this line, go to the tropics: it is there that Nature plays her famous jokes. Every time that one of those marine monsters issued from his element to exhibit himself on deck, the surprised spectators could not but laugh aloud. They were not shaped at all like the fishes of our cold climate. Some seemed to us to be altogether head; turn them about as we would, it was head in front and head behind, head above and head beneath. Others were all tail: others yet, so far as it might depend on their form, had the head, I say it with respect and submission, where one might more reasonably have expected the tail.

But how can I describe their colors, the brilliant luster of those marine monsters? The dolphin is an exception to the rule — it is a fine fish, though very dry eating — several of them were thrown on deck, and the chameleon colors of the fish, of which so many wonderful lies have been sung, appeared in all their splendor: green, blue, gold, silver, each color was revealed in turn, but only for an instant: soon they vanished, and the fish became pale, ash-color, and expired. Toward noon a shark of uncommon size paid us a visit, accompanied by his pilots, (*centronati ductores*) little fishes a foot or two in length, marked with bands of dazzling white, crossed by others of brilliant blue. They piloted the shark to the piece of bacon, attached as bait to a hook of one-inch iron: the shark seized it, and feeling himself caught turned about with such violence that the hook was straightened and pulled out of his mouth. Blood appeared on the surface, but as for the shark, he returned to the abyss. Thanks to the calm, we discovered one day an old timber all covered with shells and pursued by a crowd of fishes of about six pounds. A great number followed our ship, and we varied our dinner at their expense; such is the stupidity of these little "old women," as the sailors call them, that as soon as one is speared or wounded, all the rest rush blindly on the murderous iron. We stopped after we had taken twenty-seven, because we were tired, and presently the little old ladies went away.

Then we got out our glasses, and perceived a boat leaving a ship, becalmed like our own. At the first view, they seemed to us to be probably pirates, but as they came nearer we saw that there were only five men, and we were reassured. When they came up they were invited to come on board, but they refused, alleging that they were going to Marseilles, where, to escape the quarantine, they would be obliged to swear that they had not set foot in any other ship. Their pilot said he was the captain of a French ship, the *Félicité*, which had been wrecked on the African coast, and the crew taken on board the ship before us, the *Fourmie*. He had come to get his longitude, and after asking a few questions concerning France and taking letters from the captain and the sisters, he went away again.

On the 23d, the sky was clear and beautiful, and an exhibition of our whole wardrobe was held: the deck looked like a second-hand shop. This was repeated from time to time — for sanitary reasons. Sunday, the 28th, though the sky was serene and the wind moderate, there was such a swell that it was impossible to say mass: Wednesday, Thursday and Friday we had that pleasure. In the evening we sang vespers on deck as usual.

On the 1st of February we were in sight of the Island of San Antonio, belonging to the Cape Verde group. Here flying fish began to appear; later we saw clouds of them between the tropics; several flew on deck. On the following day, the feast of the Purification, toward nine p. m., we sang canticles and the litanies of the Holy Virgin. Never, perhaps, have the Atlantic and Pacific oceans resounded as long and as regularly with the praises of this kind Mother, who is our hope and consolation in the dangers to which we are exposed.

> "We felt how she can calm impart,
> Who, though in heaven's supremest place,
> Bears — as on earth — a Mother's heart.
> We hoped that she would guard us — she,
> Bright Mother of Him who walk'd the sea."

An almost perfect calm prevailed on the 6th and 7th, with the thermometer at 88° F.; it went no higher at any time afterward. On the night of the 8th a school of fish assailed our ship: the sharks were making war upon them. It is a fine sight to see them at night; the phosphorescence makes them shine like silver, and they are distinctly visible fifteen to twenty feet under water. On the 12th we celebrated the 100th mass on board the vessel. There were ten ships in sight. On the 13th, toward eight in the evening, a slight breath of air stirred, by means of which a vessel came toward us, accompanied by music. Dutch soldiers were singing war-songs, which contrasted oddly with the litanies of the Holy Virgin which we were singing at the same time. We hailed each other: "Where from and whither bound?" "From Rotterdam to Batavia: from Antwerp to Valparaiso," were the laconic replies, and they disappeared in the darkness. On the 14th we were insensibly drawing near to the line.

That evening, toward seven o'clock, the sailors gave three cheers for "Neptune's fire." We hurried on deck — a hundred yards from us a column of fire was rising from the sea in the midst of the darkness. It was a barrel of pitch and tar that the sailors had thrown out. Then a gruff voice was heard from the top of the mainmast — "Captain, have you any passengers on board?" "I have, twelve." "Do they propose to cross the line?" "They do." "To-morrow Neptune in person will come and administer to them the baptism indispensable to whomsoever wishes to pass the line." Neptune's envoy was hidden among the sails, but at ten o'clock, the exact time when we crossed the line, he caused a fire to appear on the top of the mainmast, which burned for a quarter of an hour. This was a signal for us to go to bed. One would say that Neptune is still pleased, says Byron, at seeing his name invoked afresh, though in a derisory manner, by his true children, in grotesque sports which were never known in his native Cyclades. The god of the seas seems to rejoice, in the depth of his empire, at seeing some feeble traces of his ancient worship still kept alive.

On the 15th, about ten in the morning, at the shout of "Neptune! Neptune!" we accompanied the captain on deck, where that great personage presented himself with all his court. He looked in truth more like his brother Pluto. He was covered with rags from head to foot: a wig and a terrifying beard of tow covered his face: he had in his hand an enormous wooden compass and a sextant, with which he began to make motions, imitating the captain when he takes the sun. On his right stood his wife, with a doll in her arms representing their son, one as idiotically attired as the other. The most outlandish masquerade rig would give you but a faint idea of theirs. Neptune first promised the captain a fortunate voyage, and then turning to me, requested me to submit to the operation of the razor. I answered that as the chief of the passengers I would gladly treat for all, but begged him to excuse us. Neptune insisted, I continued to make excuses, fearing they would play me some trick. The captain was smiling to himself, but our marine god would not give up: "It is my inalienable right," he said, "to shave, and the bounden duty of every passenger, of whatever rank or condition, to submit." At last he whispered to me that he would do the thing decently, and that it was only an innocent joke and all the fun the sailors had. So I sat down by the mainmast, Neptune put a scrap of sail-cloth over my chest, held up a little tub of soapy water, and passed his brush dipped in this liquid once or twice, very lightly and gracefully over my chin. Then with the utmost dexterity he scraped all the lather off with his wooden razor. My companions came next, and I was glad to be let off, for to crown the joke, as I had expected, Neptune ordered baptism, and instantly a deluge of water descended. Well soaked, my poor brothers fled to the quarter-deck, where the sisters stood watching the games without having to undergo the inconvenience of them. Neptune and his companions then engaged in a combat with buckets of water. When they were tired and wet through, they all went and put on their best clothes, and then performed a series of dances, each more ridiculous than the rest, and for the remainder of the day they were playing all kinds of pranks on one another, but all good-naturedly.

On the 28th a storm was brewing in the bosom of the calm. It burst on the 29th but was of short duration. Wednesday, March 1st, the north wind brought back a clear sky. At six in the evening we perceived three ships on the horizon, two of which in the north by a peculiar chance seemed to touch the ruddy disk of the setting sun, making a very pretty sight. At about eleven o'clock I observed a phenomenon in the nature of a shooting-star. The north wind was blowing with moderate force, thin white clouds were scattered over the sky, when all at once a disk of fire appeared in the blue part of the sky, about half way up from the horizon, and remained visible for five or six seconds. It was a foot in diameter and as bright as an ordinary meteor. Half of the lower edge resembled a perfect crescent, of a deep violet color. As the meteor slowly advanced, a beard of writhing reddish flames, half an inch wide by a foot and a half long, formed beneath the crescent, while two purple beams shot out from the two sides of the beard to a length of some twelve feet. Having reached this size they faded and were no longer separated by more than a couple of inches. The space between the beard and these two beams was as brilliant as the disk of the meteor. The trail terminated in a fine pale red fringe, forming a rounded rather than pointed beard.

As we advanced southward the lovely constellation of the Southern Cross and the three nebulæ called the Clouds of Magellan became more and more visible, and their height above the southern horizon increased with the latitude. Two of the nebulæ are luminous, and are without doubt composed of a great number of stars, so many and so remote that, like the Milky Way, they give only a faint light, forming apparently light clouds, whence their name. The third is dark, and is probably the entire absence of all light. I contemplated them daily with admiration and astonishment. Some writers claim that the constellations of the southern hemisphere are more brilliant than those of the northern: the sight of so many new stars, which one had never dreamed of seeing, and the disappearance of the greater part of those that one has watched since childhood, naturally inspire a variety of strange sensations.

The brilliant phosphorescent light, resembling the tail of a comet, which on dark nights marked the track of our vessel, amused us very often, and we were thrown into astonishment and admiration at the reflection that, as is claimed, it is produced by myriads of tiny insects, possessing the same light-giving power as the glow-worm and fire-fly.

On the 3d of March distant thunder was heard rolling on all sides, and in the evening we had a terrifying hailstorm. On the 11th, a fight between a band of porpoises and some birds of the size of a goose amused us a good deal. The birds persecuted the fish outrageously, darting upon them with the swiftness of lightning whenever they showed themselves on the surface or leaped out of their element. We were threatened with a tempest on the 14th: the windows were hermetically closed, but this time our fears subsided.

Once we saw a whale, sixty to seventy feet long, sporting on the surface of the water — a truly curious piece of mechanism. On the 16th we came in sight of the Malouine or Falkland Islands, which lie to the east of Patagonia: this is a group of islands, two of which are very large, Several attempts have been made by the Spanish, the French, the English and the Americans to form establishments here, but the severity of the climate has compelled them to abandon the project: latterly the Government of Buenos Aires has taken formal possession of them. On the 17th the wind was very impetuous, and a whale showed himself within thirty feet of the ship. On the 18th we saw the land of Staten Island. On the 19th we were astonished that the Shetland Islands appeared so near at hand. We did not see Cape Horn at all: it is the southernmost point of a group of islands called the Hermits. In the night of the 20th two icebergs, seeming about 100 feet high, floated within a short distance of the ship. The next morning we saw the frightful rocks, wholly volcanic, discovered only a few years ago and which have been named "Greenock." On the 23d we found ourselves very near the volcanic islands of Diego Ramirez and Ildefonso. They are composed of a frightful group of bare rocks, frequented only by ocean birds and sea-lions: and yet I contemplated with pleasure those formless isolated masses, being tired of seeing nothing day after day save the water and the firmament.

The albatross, the bird of those regions, wheeled constantly about our ship, indifferent to winds and waves. They stand four feet tall and measure some ten feet from tip to tip of their wings. It is the largest member of the winged race, and may easily be taken with a hook. The *damier*, or cape-pigeon, and the *fou* are two other birds of the cape that never left us in stormy times. The last named is easily caught, and once on the ship he will not leave it again. The stormy petrel is found in every sea: they are something the size of a swallow, and as they flit over the surface of the water, sometimes they seem to be running upon it. The inhabitants of the Faroe Islands, where these birds are abundant, run a wick through them from the bill to the tail and use them for candles, thanks to the great quantity of oil they contain.

From the 24th to the 30th we had to withstand furious tempests. Several of our sails were torn to shreds and the vessel became the sport of the winds and floods. Several of these days we should have passed in mortal anguish, had not God been our sole hope of safety. At last we breathed again and thought ourselves out of all danger, when divine Providence was pleased to send us a severer trial: for an impetuous wind arose which drove us before it with such rapidity that in a few hours we saw solid land. The peril was great. The ship, with two sails spread, was obliged to make head against the hurricane. A tempest is truly a sublime spectacle: but the description is infinitely more agreeable than the reality. If there had been less of the frightful about it, probably I should have enjoyed it more. Such were the bellowings of the winds and the waves that the captain's words, even through the trumpet, could hardly be distinguished. The waves rose in pyramids around us, and masses of water torn off by the fury of the wind were hurled upon us in floods and filled the deck with foam. Never in any of my voyages had I had such evidence of the might of the wind and the water, nor of the admirable manner in which the vessel resists such a furious tempest.

It was most fortunate that we had a courageous and experienced captain and officers and a sober, active and obedient crew. All of us, with the exception of the nuns, were on deck, with our eyes fixed on the frightful cliffs which line the wild and barbarous coasts of Patagonia. We awaited in gloomy silence the accomplishment of the divine will in regard to us. Once I went below to inform the sisters of the danger: I found them also occupied in imploring the protection of heaven by the intercession of the Holy Virgin Mary. I offered them the assistance of my ministry, but they all answered, with a smile upon their lips, and with that tranquillity, that unalterable calm, which only a heart pure and inflamed with the love of God can give, "We are not disturbed about anything. Let the Lord dispose of us as seems good to him." I had hardly reached the deck again when the wind suddenly changed and bore us in an exactly opposite direction.

On the 2d of April we were near land. On the 3d we saw the peninsula of the Tres Montes. The 8th and 9th we were coasting along Chiloe and Chile. On the 10th we saw the Island of Mocha and its dangerous shoals, level with the water. On the 12th we entered the beautiful Bay of Valparaiso, where we anchored about five in the afternoon.

Though we were extremely desirous to get on shore after so long a voyage — it was three months since we had left the Schelde — we were obliged to remain on board until the next day. As we contemplated the city from the middle of the bay it presented a truly enchanting appearance. It lies in crescent shape along the shore for a space of a league. A range of hills form a background, in which it lies as in an amphitheater. The numberless lights, shining from all the windows, presented a beautiful illumination in the evening. We especially, after so long a captivity upon the sea, with nothing to look at but sky and water, frightful rocks and barren coasts, were, it is safe to say, fully capable of appreciating this sight, and very well disposed to do so.

Early the next morning I went on shore to look for suitable lodgings for the sisters and for my companions. I soon returned to the ship with the good news that there were some Jesuits from Buenos Aires at Valparaiso, and that the French nuns of the order of Picpus invited the

Sisters of Notre Dame to stay with them. It would be hard to imagine the joy that we all felt. Each one made up his or her little bundle, and shortly we were on American soil.

Our Fathers received us with a warmth that I could never describe. We found them all together: they had just finished a retreat, to which Reverend Father Verdugo, the Provincial, had called them. Though considerably straitened, and having hardly subsistence for themselves, they forced us to lodge with them and strove to see who could render us the most services. We found in them true brothers and friends — veritable children of St. Ignatius, *corde et animo*.

The Reverend Fathers of the order of Picpus have had a college at Valparaiso for some years past, and are rendering considerable services to religion. The Sisters of Notre Dame will never forget the friendly reception that they met with at the hands of the French nuns. Neither did they leave that abode until they had reanimated themselves with a retreat of some days. They were edified by the good examples, but confused by the excess of kindness and attentions with which they were unceasingly surrounded by these good ladies.

On Tuesday, the 16th of the same month, I set out from Valparaiso for Santiago, the capital of Chile. Fathers Landau and Vercruysse were in one carriage, Father Gomila, Superior of the Missions, and myself, in another. Each carriage was drawn by two horses, one of which, that of the postilion, was attached only by a single rope. A second conductor, likewise on horseback, is to help the first in getting up and down mountains. Four loose relay horses also accompanied us, sometimes ahead and sometimes behind, without once straying in the distance of thirty-two leagues which we had to travel. The skill and swiftness with which these postilions take you along are really admirable. The whole trip was accomplished in less than twelve hours. Where this road crosses two mountain chains, branches of the Cordilleras (the Cerro Puerto and the Questa de Zapata), it resembles considerably the Simplon Pass. The road is very much traveled — every moment we met carriages, mules, donkeys and horses loaded with merchandise, and enormous wagons, often in trains of six, eight or ten, each drawn by five or six yoke of oxen, and of the rudest construction imaginable: the wheels making a deafening uproar, like the gates to Milton's Pandemonium — because the Chilean freighters say that "this racket does the oxen for music," and consequently they neglect the use of grease and tar. The yokes are as rude and heavy in proportion as the carts: and for harness they have only cords made of rawhide, strongly braided. Each cart has at least three teamsters. One sits in the wagon, armed with a long pole or whip, and from time to time he makes use of a bamboo, some thirty feet in length, to accelerate the gait of the front pair of oxen. The second sits on the yoke, between the heads of the second pair of oxen, likewise armed with a stick. There was something ridiculous in the appearance and attitude of the latter, with naked muscular legs dangling in the air, sitting only on a folded sheepskin, and still with happiness and contentment imprinted on his tanned face; happier no doubt, between the four horns of his two oxen, than many a rich man in the midst of opulence. The third rides a horse, whip in hand, and does nothing but pass and repass from one side to the other. If such a combination should pass through your streets, in its slow and solemn movement and with its prolonged, harmonious, ear-splitting creaking, I don't doubt that all the inhabitants would be sticking their noses out at the doors and that the team from Chile would attract as much attention as a dancing bear or a dozen elephants.

The Casa Blanca valley, which we traversed, is three or four leagues wide. We lodged in a little village called Cura-cavi. On leaving Valparaiso the road rises, winding along the mountain side for about an hour, until it comes out on a very extensive and lofty plain, from which there is a fine view of the sea and the Andes. At this time of the year (it is autumn here) there is very little verdure discoverable; everywhere bare hills, covered only with brush and enormous cactuses, with pretty, bright red flowers, and from time to time one may espy in the ravines or on the slopes a solitary palm, seeming to announce itself as the monarch of this desert. Even the valleys that we crossed are covered with bushes and trees of low growth. We saw a few scattered huts or cabins, built of branches of trees or of straw, but one is really tempted to believe that these people live on the dew of heaven, for there is hardly any soil to be seen. The distance from Cura-cavi to the passage of the second range, the Questa de Zapata, is about four leagues. We crossed it the next day by the pass called Prado, as well as the great torrent that drains it and which we were obliged to ford, there being no bridges. It seldom rains in summer in Chile, and consequently the rivers are usually just about dry: but when they are swollen by the melting of the snows, or by copious rains, communication is broken off for three or four days. Toward noon on the 17th we arrived at the chateau of Señor Ruiz-Tagle, one of the richest proprietors of the Republic, who received us with genuine Castilian cordiality and hospitality. As we did not know Spanish Reverend Father Gomila's acquaintance with French was of great service to us. After we had taken a lunch we were shown to an immense enclosure of olive trees, which here grow to a prodigious size. Toward four o'clock Señor Tagle took us to the city in his own carriage, which he placed at our disposal for so long a time as we should stay with him.

The city of Santiago lies at the foot of the Mapocho Mountains, in a beautiful, delicious and fertile valley 33° 35′ S. latitude and 73° 4′ W. longitude from the meridian of Paris. It is 2,400 Spanish feet above sea-level. It was founded in 1541 by Pedro Valdivia, contains some 500 squares, and the elegance and richness of its edifices, its commerce, its public works, its population of over 100,000, which is daily increasing [250,000 in 1890], make it the principal city of the Republic and one of the best in South America. It is surrounded by mountains called the Crown of Santiago. Above their summits appear the snowy peaks of the Great Andes, rising 22,000 feet above sea-level. On the east of the city stands a lofty rock, divided in the middle, which serves as a citadel: a little dilapidated wall is visible, a small and poor chapel, two barracks or rather sheds for shelter to the soldiers — were it not for the four cannon that surmount it one would hardly guess that it is a citadel. The streets of the city are wide and straight, and water circulates abundantly everywhere. The public place is a vast square, in the center of which is a beautiful fountain representing the goddess of liberty crowning Chile. The principal buildings are the Government House, the treasury building, which is very large, the archbishop's palace, a stately cathedral, still unfinished, and a former church and college of the Jesuits: the latter now belongs to the city. There are ten other rather large and good-looking churches. Before the suppression, we had here four houses of the Society. At present there are two convents of Dominicans, two of Augustinians, three of Franciscans, and two of the Order for the Redemption of Captives. There are also eight monasteries of religious ladies, namely, of Barefooted Carmelites, of St. Augustine, of Ste. Claire, of Ste. Rose of Lima, of Capuchinesses and of the French ladies of the order of Picpus. The ladies of Picpus are the only ones that keep a boarding-school, conducted on the same principles as that of Valparaiso. They give a finished education to the young ladies belonging to the first families of the country, and they give gratuitous instruction to about 300 children of the inferior classes. The people seem to be gifted with an excellent character and happy disposition, and are warmly attached to the religion of their forefathers. The Government prospers under the shadow of peace, and the wisdom of a well-conducted administration.

It would be a very fine thing if their neighbors would imitate their example.

We had the honor of being presented to the Prime Minister, and by him to the President of the Republic, General Vulnes. It appears that the Government extends its solicitous care also over the natives, particularly the Araucanians, a savage nation living across the Bio-bio river and down as far as to Patagonia. Preparations are being made to carry the light of faith to those tribes, which have been so long left in darkness, but show the most favorable dispositions to correspond to the zeal of the missionaries whom it will please divine Providence to send to them. The Government has sent an agent to Europe, with power and means to bring back the Jesuits into this vast Republic.

At Santiago, and throughout the Republic, some very edifying religious practices exist. At the Angelus, at the sound of the bell, everybody stops in the streets, uncovers his head and recites the prayers of the angelic salutation very devoutly. When the sound of the cathedral bell announces the elevation of the mass, every one prostrates himself, with his face turned toward the church, and adores the holy sacrament single-mindedly and in silence. When the holy sacrament is carried to a sick person, the priest goes in an open carriage and carries the host conspicuously; at his passage all the families come forth from their houses and all the passers-by prostrate themselves and entone canticles to the praise of God. It is an uninterrupted succession of different choirs until he reaches the sick person's residence. If the priest takes the holy sacrament to several sick persons, it is in procession: he is accompanied by a guard of honor and preceded by a military band. The ancient faith is far from being dead in South America. Some modern travelers seem to wish to claim the contrary: they judge by practices and ceremonies which they do not understand and the purity and grandeur of which are unknown to them: they visit for the most part only the impious and incredulous of their own stamp.

Valparaiso is the second city of Chile in commerce and in population, containing about 40,000 souls. Business is mainly in the hands of Europeans of various nations. It is only in the last few years that the city has made any notable growth: twenty years ago it had no more than four or five thousand inhabitants. The greater part of the houses in Chile are of one story and built of sun-dried or fired bricks. This is a necessary precaution, on account of the frequent earthquakes, caused by sixteen volcanoes at proportionate distances and in constant operation. These earthquakes are considered the great calamity of the Chilians. The dwellings of the poor, who appear to be many, especially in the outskirts of the cities, are only miserable huts of straw or twigs, veritable dens of misery, ignorance and vice. The poor in Chile are in a pitiable state as regards religion; their poverty is only too often caused by their great indolence and laziness. The interiors of the houses of the rich compare favorably with the most splendid mansions of the European nobility.

Chile extends from the confines of the desert of Atacama to Cape Horn. The chain of the Andes separates it from the Argentine Republic. It stretches 620 geographical leagues from north to south and its width varies from fifty-five to twenty-two leagues. Meantime Chile may be considered as a plain, or rather a continuation of the Andes. Its mineralogy is very rich and vast. It may perhaps excel any other part of the globe in metallic products. Mines of gold, silver, copper, tin and lead and all the metals and semi-metals are numerous and abundant. I have obtained a fine collection from the director of the Museum of Santiago, which I have forwarded to the Museum of Brussels through Mr. De Boom, residing in Valparaiso. Captain Hall says that several hundred copper mines are being worked in Chile, with one of gold and three of silver to every fifty of copper. He supposes that the annual production of copper is 60,000 quintals of 100 Spanish pounds each, and that the yearly exportation amounts to more than

20,000 marcs, a marc being eight piastres or dollars. The gold mines are neglected, as much by reason of the great profit derived from the copper mines as because of the difficulty and cost of exploiting the mines of the precious metal.

The climate of Chile seems to be delicious, especially in the central portion — a region which the fertility of its soil renders one of the most agreeable residence places in America. In the northern part sugar-cane, yams, wheat, and corn are raised successfully, and legumes and fruit-bearing plants and trees come to perfection. Never have I eaten anywhere better bananas and melons. Peaches, oranges, lemons, apples, quinces, strawberries, and an infinity of other fruits grow here in the greatest abundance. I have seen thickets of grapevines, which, though they were untended, produced excellent grapes. There are ninety-five varieties of forest trees known, of which only thirteen lose their leaves in winter. Chile abounds in horses, sheep, and pigs of excellent kinds. The rivers are well stocked with fish: the Andes form a nursery for birds of prey, and in general the different species of birds are innumerable in Chile.

Spring begins here about the 21st of September, summer in December, autumn in March and winter in June. In the northern part, between twenty-four and thirty-six degrees of latitude, during spring and until the middle of summer, hardly a drop of rain falls: the sky is always clear: but from about the middle of April to the end of August the rains are abundant. In the southern provinces it often rains for nine or ten days at a stretch. Thunder is seldom heard, except in the neighborhood of the Andes. There are very heavy dews in spring, summer and fall. No venomous reptiles are met with in all Chile, nor any wild beasts dangerous to man.

CHAPTER II.

THE VOYAGE AROUND CAPE HORN.

Valparaiso to Fort Vancouver.

Pleasant voyage to Callao — Observations on Lima and Peru — Enthusiastic reception by the populace — To sea again — Trade-winds and calms — Provisions running low — Coast of Oregon sighted — Confronted by bar of the Columbia — Doubts and fears — The wonderful crossing — Arrival at Astoria and reception by Birnie — Fort Vancouver and Dr. McLoughlin — News from the mountain missions.

WE took leave at last of the respectable Tagle family, who entertained us with all the charity and hospitality imaginable for ten days. We reached Valparaiso in time to make all preparations for our second embarcation. On the 1st of May we said farewell to our dear brothers in Valparaiso, and the *Infatigable* weighed anchor on the day following. The distance from Valparaiso to Callao, the port of Lima, is about 500 leagues. I have never seen so calm, smooth and beautiful a sea as that which now passed before our eyes: rightfully do they call it *Mare Pacificum*. We had a constantly favorable breeze, and the same sails that were set at Valparaiso remained untouched, nor did the ship deviate a line from its course, until we arrived in the beautiful bay of Callao, after a navigation of eight days. An almost entire uniformity marked our passage — not the slightest accident nor unpleasantness arose to mar this beautiful run, and save for the usual changes of day and night, sunshine and cloud, nothing interrupted the agreeable monotony of the scene. On the 11th of May I found myself in the capital of Peru.

Since we have coasted along a great part of South America, I will give you my observations and such information as I have gathered concerning those coasts. On the Pacific side they differ greatly from those on the Atlantic. The latter are in general bold and rocky, and having the advantage of great and navigable rivers, they offer a multitude of the finest harbors in the universe. The coast of Brazil is especially favored in this respect, throughout its extent of about 1,000 leagues. All this coast is very fertile, and capable of supporting a very large population. On the Pacific side, on the contrary, the coasts are with few exceptions sterile and frightful, and as it seldom or never rains over a great extent of country, there are considerable tracts as arid as the desert of Arabia. Communication by land between Chile and Lima is almost impracticable by reason of these arid plains. They form even serious obstacles to traffic between the different States, which is therefore conducted by sea. There is a notable difference between a voyage toward the northwest and one to the southeast: the latter nearly always encounters contrary winds and currents. Though the ports on the Pacific are not so well furnished with harbors as are Brazil and Terra Firma, still there are several that possess considerable advantages. It should be noted that the same difficulties of communication exist between different places on the opposite coasts of the southern continent, but for different reasons. On the Atlantic side it is the extraordinary mass of vegetation that covers the ground, presenting almost insurmountable obstacles to the opening of roads. But navigation is so easy on that delicious coast, where maritime dangers are almost unknown, that there is really no motive for making extraordinary efforts to open highroads. To make up for the difficulty of internal communication by land, there is no country in the world having so great a number of navigable rivers as South America. Those great and beautiful rivers, the Magdalena, the Orinoco, the Amazon, the Plata and their thousands of branches, stretching in every direction through the continent, offer convenient routes between the most distant regions. "Of all parts of the globe," says Humboldt, "America is the best watered." There are a great number of rivers as large as the Rhine or Danube, the very names of which are hardly known, even to those who may be considered well versed in geography.

I have said that we dropped anchor in the port of Callao on the 11th of May. Callao is a little town of about 5,000 inhabitants, built on a sandy shore and possessing a fine fortress. An omnibus line connects it with Lima, some two leagues away, making the trip in an hour. The capital of Peru, seen from a distance, presents a magnificent appearance. The plain on which it lies rises imperceptibly from the sea. The approach is between a number of rows of trees, which extend a mile and form a handsome and popular promenade on either side of the road, with stone benches. The entry into the city is by a triumphal arch. The streets run in parallels, crossing at right angles. I went thither immediately upon our arrival in Callao, to look for suitable lodgings for my companions and the nuns. I was accompanied by good Father Gomila, who had come with us from Chile to assist us in a land of whose language we were ignorant. The city of Lima is spread over a great deal of ground: the civil wars that have raged there for years past are decreasing the number of inhabitants day by day, and it will not exceed to-day 40,000 souls. The arrival of two Jesuits was soon noised abroad through the city, and we received calls from a great number of citizens, who came to salute and welcome us, begging us in the tenderest and most persuasive words to establish ourselves among them. The ladies were in a marked state of impatience, mingled with joy and curiosity to see the sisters come. We went to spent the night with Rev. Mateo d'Aguilar, a zealous priest, director of a religious house, where a retreat is given each month for the ladies of the city.

On the following day we paid our respects to the bishop, Luna Pizarro, who has been presented to the Roman court as successor to the late archbishop. He received us with great affection, and spoke in terms of praise and esteem of our Society. We also visited the principal churches and establishments of the city, after which we prepared to return to Callao. The omnibus, with five horses, which I had hired to convey us from the port of Lima, was by some accident detained nearly half an hour. The people came from all quarters to see us, and the carriage was soon surrounded by a numerous crowd. Mothers, and among them ladies of distinction, pressed through the crowd, held up their children, kissed the hands and veils of the sisters, and conjured them to remain and establish themselves in the city. The men, too, showed us the greatest respect. The same regard and affection were manifested along the road. The people were prompted to act in this manner by the conviction that the education of youth is neglected in their country, and they severely feel the want of it. When the sisters arrived in Lima, they took up their lodgings at an old Carmelite convent, now converted into an orphan asylum. The crowd poured into the building after them. For four or five days they received visits from morning till night. The most respectable families came with their interpreters, and vied with each other in showing them marks of kindness and affection. They were obliged to accept three carriages in which, accompanied by the principal ladies of the city, they visited the churches and the other establishments. When they alighted at any place, the people crowded around them, even in the churches, to kiss their hands, their heads, and veils. The humble sisters received these homages with reluctance, but they were to them a heartfelt consolation; and who knows whether they may not prove instrumental in the designs of Providence to obtain the object of this kind-hearted people? There is not a single religious order in this city that devotes its labors to teach the inferior classes. Hence their want and desire of instruction.

I went with my companions to lodge at the former college of the Society, called St. Paul's, where we all occupied the same room. The establishment is very extensive, covering one of the square blocks of the city, and is divided into four square buildings, each having an area in the middle, and supported by a double colonnade. The roof is flat, as are all the roofs of all the churches and houses in Lima, for here it never rains. Part of the college serves as a residence for several ecclesiastics and for the friars of St. Philip of Neri; some other quarters of the same establishment have been transformed into barracks and stables. There seemed to be but a single voice in the whole city — all demanded the return of the Jesuits. At a distance the city with its numerous domes presents a beautiful prospect, but when we enter it all the buildings, apparently without roofs, give it the appearance of a city of ruins. The streets are wide and paved with little round stones. Little streams of water run in every direction through the streets, and carry away a good share of the filth. One of the greatest curiosities of Lima is the fruit-market, by the abundance and variety of tropical productions. There are seventy-two churches within the precincts of the city, including those of religious orders, which are numerous. The cathedral, whose architecture is of the sixteenth century, is a magnificent pile. It fronts the large public square, on which is also built their archiepiscopal palace. The other sides of the square are adorned with rich stores and colonnades. The main altar of the cathedral is a splendid piece of workmanship. It consists of three rows of columns supporting one another, and plated and ornamented with silver.

The government buildings occupy another side of the great square. In the center there is a beautiful iron fountain, in the center of the vast basin of which rises a column of the same metal surmounted by a bronze statue of Fame.

At the time of my visit to Lima, it was certainly an unhappy city. There was nothing to be seen but preparations for war; a new revolution was expected from day to day, and no one had confidence in either side. Meanwhile the population is dwindling away. "There is nothing to-day," said Mr. Lesson, "to remind one of those times of flattery and opulence when the merchants were rich enough to pave with solid silver the principal street, by which the viceroy, the duke of La Plata, came in 1682 to take possession of his government."

Peru! Land of gold and silver, with thy fertile and beautiful soil, and temperate and healthy climate, once the terrestrial paradise of South America, now its poorest and most wretched region: thy commerce languishes; the education of thy children is neglected; the officers of thy venal army fly from standard to standard; the ambition and faithlessness of thy leaders have exhausted thy treasury; thy chiefs, destitute of patriotism, seek their own aggrandizement, and oppress thy people; — such is the state of things in Peru at present.

The length of Peru from northwest to southeast is 430 leagues, and its average width 160 leagues. The country is crossed from north to south by the Andes, which are divided into two parallel chains; the central is the higher, the other is called the Coast Range. Maritime Peru is an inclined plain, almost entirely sterile and sandy. This is attributed mainly to the height of the Andes, which catch the drifting clouds and prevent the rain from falling on the plains: partly also to the dry winds which blow constantly from the desert of Atacama to the Gulf of Guayaquil. The cultivated spots lie principally along the rivers, and the vegetation is entirely nourished by the abundant dew, which often resembles a light rain. Upon all the coast of Peru the sun is visible hardly six months of the year, and the air is in general stifling and variable. In the interior, on the high lands, vegetation is abundant and of lofty growth.

Up to the elevation of 10,000 feet, the climate is a mixture of autumn and spring. Beyond this, at the height of 14,000 feet, commences the region of eternal winter, where the volcanoes are in full operation, vomiting flames and lava upon the glaciers and snowfields round about. It is the abysses whence these volcanoes are fed that so often scatter terror and consternation among the sparse populations of the Republic. We had three shocks during our short stay in Lima, two of which were pretty hard. In 1746 the little city of

Callao was swallowed up by the sea with all its inhabitants. In Lima hardly a house was left standing, and more than 5,000 persons were buried in the ruins. In 1828 nearly 1,000 lives were lost.

In the maritime region of Peru there are immense forests of pine, cedar, acacia and *ceiba* of prodigious thickness, and an infinity of other valuable woods. Various wild animals are found in these forests, and an endless variety of venomous insects and reptiles, and a great number of birds of rare beauty. Some of the rivers are well stocked with fish, but at the same time crocodiles abound.

Peru lacks the first essentials of internal commerce: there are neither good roads, nor canals, nor good bridges: merchandise is transported on the backs of mules. Agriculture is so neglected that most of their grain has to come from abroad. It can literally be said that in Peru they walk on gold and silver and lack for bread. The mountains abound in mineral wealth: they could furnish the whole universe with gold and silver if the mines were properly worked. There are seventy mines of gold, 680 of silver, four of copper, four of quicksilver, twelve of lead. Emeralds are found, and marcasites, and other precious stones in various parts of the country.

On the 26th of May we received for the last time the blessing of Monseigneur Luna Pizarro, and after taking farewell of our new acquaintances in Lima we turned again to the sea. Since our departure from Antwerp, the *Infatigable* had become filled with intrusive little nuisances, who explored and spoiled everything they could find in the ship. During our absence from Callao a good fumigation took place, and not less than 1,500 rats were found suffocated in the various apartments.

On the 27th we left the roads of Callao, favored by the trade-winds, which blew steadily from the southeast, insomuch that our course was not interrupted for an instant until we were past the Equator. Our sails were filled by the good breeze, and required little or no attention. The air was of the most agreeable temperature. Do not think that in these moments of tranquil navigation the sailors are idle: the captain always takes care to keep their hands full. We never saw them strolling idly, or loafing, or even talking in a loud tone. The captain was constantly employed upon his observations, calculations or books. We too had our occupations. The sisters observed most strictly all the rules and holy practices in use in their houses, so far as was practicable at sea, and were never seen without a needle, a pen, a chaplet or a spiritual book in their hands: all their conduct during this long sea-voyage was very regular and edifying. Father Louis gave French lessons to the Italian brothers, who applied themselves without relaxation to the study of languages: and I gave lessons in English to them all.

The trade-winds left us finally, and soon we found ourselves in a variable region, where Æolus blew from every direction and where squalls never let us alone, for a fortnight. Calms would come at intervals, and those are the most disagreeable periods of a long sea-voyage. Then an expression of discouragement and melancholy appears on the captain's face and on those of all the crew: it seems as if one were condemned to perish there: a blackened sea surrounds you: a somber sky covers you, and the clouds on the horizon, which appear impenetrable obstacles, changing form and physiognomy every instant, call to mind all kinds of phantoms: while the ship, like a weak toy upon a sea in torment, swelling and sinking unceasingly, rocks you and rocks you until your head and stomach both turn. In those times of disagreeable calm one is always on the lookout to observe every point of the compass, always trying to catch some gleam of hope from every little breath, though scarcely able to stir the sails, however little. At last light but favorable winds came, and drove us tranquilly toward the Tropic of Cancer. When we passed the overhead sun, in longitude 130°, we enjoyed a serene sky, and we noticed that our bodies cast no shadows. A good breeze from the northeast came to restore our happiness: it was even so refreshing that we were obliged to resume our flannels, and when we thought of the region of calms from which we had just escaped, it is impossible to describe our contentment at the change. As we advanced northward, the familiar stars came more and more in sight, and we bade farewell to the Magellanic Clouds and the beautiful southern constellations, which disappeared one after another below the horizon. Between the tropics, here as on the Atlantic, we saw from time to time clouds of flying fish.

From the 17th of July on we had only a continual alternation between uneasiness and joy, as the wind was contrary or favorable. Our disquietude was the better founded, that our provisions were beginning to run low: we were reduced to rice boiled in water and salt meat, which gave out such an odor as might spoil any one's appetite. About the 25th it was announced that we were going to lose our soup, because water was getting scarcer and more precious every day, and the wind seemed obstinately resolved to blow against us. At last, on the 28th, after many prayers and vows, the coast of Oregon was sighted: our joy was unanimous and great. And still the greatest obstacle, that which I feared the most between Antwerp and Fort Vancouver, was not yet overcome: we had now to cross the most dangerous bar known in America, which lies completely across the mouth of the Columbia river.[1]

The captain had been unable to obtain a chart or even any information concerning this dangerous pass, and was, we knew, entirely unacquainted with the rocks and breakers which, at this season, render it almost impracticable. We soon perceived Cape Disappointment, which seems to point out to travelers the course they are to pursue. It was growing late, and the captain resolved to steer out into the open sea, to avoid the danger of running aground during the night. As the vessel moved slowly onward, leaving the shore in the distance, we stood out on deck, contemplating from afar the high mountains and vast forests of Oregon. Here and there we could distinguish wisps of smoke curling upward from the huts of our poor Indians. This sight filled my soul with indescribable emotions. It would be necessary to be placed in the same position, to understand fully what were then our feelings. Our hearts palpitated with joy as we gazed on those boundless regions, over which were scattered so many abandoned souls — the young, the aged — dying in the shades of infidelity, for want of missionaries; an evil which we were about to alleviate, if not for all, at least for a great number.

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[1] The bar at the mouth of the Columbia was, in its natural condition, one of the most dangerous known to navigation. In recent times this condition has been largely removed by a system of parallel jetties built by the Government to concentrate the flow over the bar and scour out a deep channel.

On the 29th all the Fathers celebrated the holy sacrifice, wishing to offer a last violence to heaven and force, as it were, a benediction on our mission. The morning was dark and gloomy: so were our spirits. About ten o'clock the sky cleared, and allowed us to approach, with caution, the vast and fearful mouth of the Columbia. There was nothing anywhere but enormous breakers, and no way of avoiding them appeared. Consternation was general. "This is really perishing in port," said one. "It is no use," said another, "we can never cross." They even came to me and proposed taking us to the Sandwich Islands. Those who were brought to these distant shores by the loftier motives seemed to be the only ones who preserved some gleam of hope: but neither did they perceive any way of arriving at the desired haven. One of the small boats had been made ready to go out and sound, but the weather was so bad that it could not be launched. On the 30th the north wind was succeeded by a perfect calm, but that was no more favorable to our entry than the wind. About ten in the morning a breeze sprang up and the captain approached the bar. He made several observations from the masthead: after which he announced that he would never dare to risk the passage. But just then, when everything seemed desperate, a ship was espied in the distance, in Baker's bay, making toward Cape Disappointment, and hope sprang up again at once in all hearts. "Let us see how they come out, then we can go in by the same way," was the unanimous expression. For the space of an hour all eyes were fixed on this ship, which seemed to be approaching us. Vain hope! At the moment when the signal of distress was about to be displayed on our vessel, the other disappeared all at once from our eyes. What phantoms the imagination creates under the influence of distress! The captain had heard vaguely at Lima that a large English man-of-war had been sent out to blockade the entrance of the Columbia, and this at once came to his mind. "Assuredly it is the fatal vessel that we have seen." The observation that it was only a two-masted craft instead of a large three-master, hardly sufficed to calm the disturbed minds. The second officer had before this been offering to go and reconnoiter the mouth of the river, and the captain's well-founded fear of those tumultuous unknown waters was at last overcome by his urgency. Preparations were soon made, and at three in the afternoon, the little boat, with four men only, was making its way through the waves, which seemed on the point of swallowing it every instant. As far as we could make it out, we followed it with our eyes — it bore our last gleam of hope.

On the 31st, the day of our Holy Founder, five masses were celebrated in his honor. The sisters approached the holy table and joined us in imploring him to show himself that day the kind father of his children. Early in the morning, all eyes were again fixed on the spot where the skiff had disappeared the night before: toward half-past nine it came in sight again. At once all glasses were fastened upon it — the agreed signal which was to announce good news did not appear; still we did not lose all hope. Our hearts beat hard: all were divided between hope and fear. By eleven o'clock the little craft came up at last — a mournful silence reigned — all awaited uneasily the word which was to decide our fate. At last the mate was on board. "About eleven last night," he said to the captain, "we found the passage, which seemed to have not less than five fathoms of water. We did not find any insurmountable obstacles." Immediately all hearts were dilated and all faces cleared up at the same time that the sails of the *Infatigable* were spread. Under a light breeze, we advanced slowly and cautiously toward the formidable mouth of the Columbia.

It was a most beautiful day — a cloudless sky — a blazing sun, such as we had not seen in a long time — everything seemed to combine for a day of joy and gladness. All we required to make us perfectly happy was to achieve the entrance into the river. As we drew near the redoubtable bar, every one resumed his serious air, holding himself in readiness for whatever might come. The sisters had gone below to recite the chaplet: when they came up again, we were already upon the dreaded bar. The sounders had several times reported seven fathoms — soon six fathoms was heard — after that five — then four and one-half — presently four, and so it went, always growing less. Each cry was a shock that oppressed our hearts, and at the repeated cry of three fathoms all countenances were visibly discomposed, for that was the vessel's minimum draft: several of us thought that it was all over, that the ship was about to strike: but God only wished to try our faith. "We are between life and death," said the mate to the captain at this time, "but we must go on at any price." Soon the cry of four fathoms caused something of a revival of joy. But of the five miles of the bar we had as yet made only three. Suddenly a cry of "three fathoms" plunged us again into consternation — at the cry of two and one-half fathoms I felt, as it were, annihilated.

I expected to see the anchor let go, and then a mad scramble for the boats. But our imperturbable captain cried, "She is a *passepartout,* this *Infatigable!* Go ahead!" Heaven was for us — the next cast of the lead showed four fathoms, and the depth increased at every plunge until we heard the cry "no bottom." We were out of danger, in the south channel.

About four that afternoon, we saw a canoe, hollowed out of a single tree-trunk, coming toward our ship. In it was an American who had been established on this coast for a number of years, accompanied by a dozen "siwashes" of the Clatsop tribe. We signed to them to come on: the uproar of their cries, all talking at once, would be hard to render, and my companions and the sisters were greatly amused. Upon the captain's invitation they came on board. It was then that we understood more clearly the danger from which divine Providence had preserved us. "You have gotten out of a very dangerous place," said the American. "We thought that you must infallibly perish, for no ship has ever come in that way before. When I saw you on the breakers I started to come to your rescue: but I could not overcome the fears of these poor Indians." The latter, for their part, indicated to us by signs the terror they had suffered at seeing us in continual danger of grounding on the bar: their gestures expressed their sentiments in so natural a manner that it was impossible not to be touched.

The better to understand the extent of our obligation to divine Providence, you must know that the Columbia divides near its mouth into two channels: one on the north, skirting Cape Disappointment, which is the one by which we should have entered, and the other on the south, which is shunned by vessels on account of its narrowness and its breakers, over which we had passed without accident. God had not chosen to share with any one the glory of our deliverance: he even permitted that an attempt to show us the right way, should operate to keep us from it. Mr.

Birnie,[2] at present in charge at Fort George or Astoria, which is but three leagues from the sea, having perceived our distress two days before, had gone out to the extremity of the cape with a band of Indians, and had there lighted fires, waved flags, fired repeatedly from guns and cannon, to draw us toward himself. We had indeed observed all these signals, but seafaring makes people suspicious: it was feared that it was some ambush of the Indians, desirous of capturing the vessel. In short, St. Ignatius was to be our pilot, and we have no cause to be otherwise than glad that it was so. In gratitude, this passage so fortunately accomplished for the first time on the day of his feast, was named "St. Ignatius Passage."

The second visit that we received on board was from some Indians of the Chinook tribe, who are scattered through the forests which border the Columbia river on the north. My companions, who were seeing Indians for the first time, wondered extremely at the poverty of their raiment, their uncleanliness, their long hair and their tranquil manners. I warned them that it was necessary to be very reserved with savages if they did not want them to become too familiar. It is natural for almost all Indians to be lazy, but it is worse with these, because of the great ease with which they can procure fish and game. They live from day to day, and spend the greater part of the daytime stretched motionless in the sun: it is no wonder therefore that the ship was almost continually flooded with these poor people.

We had discovered, at anchor under the cape, the ship that we had been watching the previous evening. About nine that night, just as we were all singing the *Te Deum* together in thanksgiving for all the benefits received in the course of the day and of our long voyage, Mr. Birnie and the owner of the ship came on board: they told us that having perceived our distress, they had tried to come out and show us the way, but that the wind had been contrary and had forced them to anchor.

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[2] James Birnie, superintendent of the Hudson's Bay Company's post of Fort George, the former Fort Astoria.

In short, the 31st of July was a day of happiness for us all, and the faces of the party were hardly recognizable.—The American who had been the first to visit us, sent us out some fresh salmon and potatoes; you may judge, from what I said above of our bill of fare, whether his civility was appreciated.

The 1st of August had to be a day of relaxation: we were all in need of it. We commenced by saying two thanksgiving masses. Early in the morning Mr. Birnie had come on board again. It was impossible for a man to be more civil and obliging. He offered to guide us through the sand-bars, which are very numerous and dangerous in the bay. When we arrived opposite Astoria[3] we cast anchor, and were at once invited to come on shore and take a walk, to which we needed no urging. We received the most cordial welcome from Mrs. Birnie and her ten children: the Sisters especially seemed to have won from the first the entire friendship of the seven young ladies who belong to this honorable family. We were shown a tree that is spoken of by Balbi in his geography, which is forty-two feet in circumference; one branch alone measured over two fathoms. It would be impossible to imagine grander or more beautiful forests than those which cover both banks of the Columbia as far as its junction with the Willamette. There is one bush that is very abundant, growing to a height of three or four feet and bearing excellent berries, something like the myrtles of Europe. Mr. Birnie took me to the tomb of the famous chief Tecumle, [Comcomly?] who was buried in the forest behind the fort. When he used to come to Vancouver in the days of his glory, 300 slaves would precede him, and he used to carpet the ground that he had to traverse, from the main entrance of the fort to the Governor's door, several hundred feet, with beaver and otter skins.

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[3] John Jacob Astor's trading-post, established in 1811, transferred to the Northwest Fur Company (later Hudson's Bay Company) in December, 1813.

After a long and pleasant walk we returned to Mr. Birnie's home, where dinner was waiting for us: the open air had sharpened all appetites and we did honor to the dishes accordingly. I blessed the table and said grace, as is the custom in America whenever there is a priest among the guests, even in a Protestant household, as was the case here.

On the 2d I set out in a canoe for Fort Vancouver to notify Governor McLoughlin and Reverend Mr. Blanchet[4] of our arrival. Here again it was Mr. Birnie who had the kindness to furnish me a large Chinook canoe, manned by nine Indians. He himself remained on the vessel until it was past all the dangerous places of the bay, and he furnished a pilot to Vancouver, which is thirty leagues from Astoria. Favored by a good wind, and with two sheets spread for sails, we reached our destination toward evening on the following day. Imagine my joy and happiness at finding there the worthy Mr. McLoughlin, to whom our mountain mission is under so great obligations. I did not find Mr. Blanchet, as he was at the mission of St. Paul on the Willamette: a messenger was at once dispatched to him. But I had the further pleasure of finding the excellent and Reverend Mr. Demers, of whom I have often spoken in my letters. He was making his plans to start soon for Canada, in search of nuns: you may judge of the joy that our arrival caused him. On the 5th I went down the Columbia to take to the ship the good news I had received at the fort. The news from the mountains was very consoling. Father De Vos and his companions[5] had reached St. Mary's among the Flatheads in safety — the whole tribe of the Cœur d'Alènes was converted — a church had already been built among them — 436 savages had been baptized from the nations of New Caledonia — a great number of nations were persistently calling for Black-robes — a large convent was being organized on the Willamette.

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[4] Reverend Francis Norbert Blanchet, appointed from the Montreal district to the charge of the Oregon Mission in 1838, with the title of vicar-general.

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[5] Fathers Peter De Vos and Adrien Hoeken and Brother J. B. McGean, who started for the mountains after Father De Smet's return to St. Louis in 1842, and reached St. Mary's in the following spring. A second party, consisting of Fathers Joseph Joset and Peter Zerbinati with Brother Vincent Magri, all of whom were fresh arrivals from Europe, followed them a few months later, arriving in the summer of 1843.

Peter De Vos was born in Ghent in 1797. He came to America in 1836, and chose the field of the western missions, though of delicate health, being subject, it appears, to hemorrhages. He remained eight years among the Flatheads and in the Willamette valley, and was thence transferred to the College of Santa Clara, California, where he died April 17, 1859.

Adrien Hoeken, younger brother of Christian Hoeken, whose death in 1851 is recounted in these letters, was born in Holland in 1815. He opened the mission of St. Ignatius among the Kalispels, and ten years later (1854) with Father Menetrey, the present St. Ignatius, Montana, the former site having proved unsuitable. He also reopened in 1859 the abandoned mission to the Blackfeet. He died at Marquette College, Milwaukee, April 19, 1897.

Father Zerbinati was accidentally drowned near St. Mary's in the summer of 1845.

Brother Magri died at Lewiston, Idaho, June 18, 1869. He was a skilled mechanic, and while at St. Ignatius was in charge of the grist and sawmills.

CHAPTER III.

PLANTING NEW MISSIONS.[1]

Tarrying at Fort Vancouver — Farewell to their ship — Up the Willamette — Received by Vicar-General Blanchet — Selecting the site for St. Francis Xavier Mission — Sickness and hard work — De Smet sets forth for the interior — Up the Columbia — Hospitably entertained at the Dalles and Walla Walla — Across the Spokan Plain — Makes a map and names some streams — Met by Hoeken and the Kalispels — The first St. Ignatius Mission — The Cœur d'Alènes apologize — He visits them at their Sacred Heart Mission — Attempts to cross to the Bitter Root — Deep snow and a flood — Tries again by way of Clark's Fork — Gives up and winters with the Kalispels — A glorious Christmas — Easter among the Flatheads — Starts the work at St. Ignatius and returns to Fort Vancouver — Bright prospects of work in Oregon — Sets out overland with supplies for upper missions — A visit to the fishing Indians — St. Ignatius of the Bay.

I SET out for Fort Vancouver on the 2d of August, [as stated in the previous chapter] wishing to reach there before my companions, that I might inform the Reverend Mr. Blanchet of our happy arrival. As to our Fathers, the remainder of their voyage may be summed up in few words. On the 3d and 4th their vessel was almost stationary, for want of a favorable wind. At a glance, their three days' voyage might be measured. Toward evening a gentle breeze sprang up, and thus permitted them to pursue their

[1] This chapter is in part translated from Father De Smet's manuscript Journal, and in part taken from his published letters, as follows: Letters II, IV, V and XX, *Oregon Missions*, corresponding to Letters I, III, IV and XX, *Missions de l'Orégon*. The first was written to his brother Francis and dated St. Francis Xavier on the Willamette, Oct. 9, 1844; the second and third to Bishop (afterward Archbishop) Hughes of New York, both writen from the above place and dated respectively June 20 and August 7, 1845; and the fourth to Mrs. Parmentier of Brooklyn, dated St. Ignatius, July 23, 1846.

course. In a few hours they passed the rocks, extending the distance of six leagues.[2] They were then enabled to keep the center of the river, where the numerous windings of the stream compelled them to make continual manœuvres.

In this place the river is most magnificent: the smooth polished surface of the waters — the rapid current, almost concealed from view by the contraction of its rocky bed — the sullen roaring of the waterfalls and cascades — produce upon the mind an effect of sublimity and grandeur not to be described. One is never weary admiring the richness, beauty and variety of these solitary regions. The shores on either side are bordered by lofty forests, and crowned with thickly-wooded mountains. It is more especially in the forest that the grand, the picturesque, the sublime, the beautiful, form the most singular and fantastic combinations. From the loftiest giants of the forest down to the humblest shrubs, all excite the spectator's astonishment. The parasites form a characteristic feature of these woodlands. They cling to the tree, climb to a certain height, and then, letting their tops fall to the earth, again take root — again shoot up — push from branch to branch — from tree to tree, in every direction — until, tangled, twisted and knotted in every possible form, they festoon the whole forest with drapery in which a groundwork of the richest verdure is diversified with garlands of the most varied and many-colored flowers. In ascending the Columbia we meet from time to time with bays of considerable extent, interspersed with handsome little islands, which, thrown as it were like groups of flowers and verdure, present a charming spectacle. Here the painter should go to study his art — here would he find the loveliest scenery, the most varied and brilliant coloring. At every step the scene becomes more ravishing; the perspective more noble and majestic. In no other part of the world is nature so great a *coquette* as here.

At length, on the 5th of August, the vessel arrived at Fort

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[2] Fr. miles.

Vancouver,[3] about seven o'clock in the evening. The Governor, [McLoughlin] an excellent and truly pious man, together with his lady and the most respectable personages of the place, [Douglas and Barclay][4] were assembled on the shore to receive us. As soon as the ship had cast anchor we landed and hastened to the fort, where we were received and treated with all possible cordiality. Here we were obliged to tarry eight days for the Reverend Mr. Blanchet, who did not arrive till the 12th, not having received my letter informing him of our arrival. No sooner was he aware of it than he hastened to join us, bringing with him a considerable number of his parishioners. He had traveled the entire night and day, and we were delighted to meet this indefatigable clergyman. Though so comfortably situated at the fort, yet we were anxious to arrive as soon as possible at the place destined us by divine Providence. The pious nuns likewise sighed for their convent home of Willamette. Monsieur Blanchet accordingly made the necessary arrangement for our departure, and we left Fort Vancouver on the 14th.

An affecting adieu awaited us. Our worthy captain stood upon the shore. The emotion was sensibly felt by each one of us. For eight months we had shared the same dangers, and so often stood together, gazing in the very face of death: could we then restrain the parting tear, which seemed to gush from the fountain of the heart, as we remembered his kindness?

Our little squadron consisted of four canoes, manned by the parishioners of Mr. Blanchet, and our own sloop. We sailed up the river and soon entered the Willamette, whose waters flow into the Columbia.

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[3] For notes on Fort Vancouver and Doctor McLoughlin, see pp. 387 and 355.

[4] James Douglas was for many years prominent in Hudson Bay Company affairs in the northwest, in conjunction with Doctor McLoughlin. It was he who granted Blanchet and Demers the site for the Willamette Valley establishment.— Doctor Forbes Barclay accompanied Sir John Ross on an Arctic voyage in his youth; came to Oregon as surgeon for the Hudson Bay Company in 1840; was long identified with Fort Vancouver and Oregon City, and died at the latter place in 1873.

As night approached we moored our vessels and encamped upon the shore. There, grouped around the fire, we partook of our evening meal. The night was calm and serene — all nature was hushed in profound silence — all invited us to repose; but the swarms of mosquitoes with which these woods abound prevented our slumber. The nuns, to whom we had yielded the tent, suffered equally with those who had nothing but the star-spangled canopy of heaven above them. You will not, consequently, be surprised that the night appeared somewhat long and that the morning's dawn found us on foot. It was the festival of the glorious Assumption of the Mother of God, which, in these regions, is usually solemnized on the following Sunday. Aided by the nuns, I erected a small altar. Mr. Blanchet offered the holy sacrifice, at which all communicated.

Finally, the 17th, about eleven o'clock, we came in sight of our dear mission of Willamette. Mr. Blanchet charged himself with the transportation of our baggage. A cart was procured to conduct the nuns to their dwelling, which is about five miles from the river. In two hours we were all assembled in the chapel of Willamette, to adore and thank our Divine Savior, by the solemn chanting of the *Te Deum*, in which all hearts and lips joined with lively emotion.

Early in the morning of Sunday, the 18th, the day on which the Assumption is celebrated here, we saw the Canadian cavaliers arriving in crowds with their wives and children, whom they had brought from great distances, to assist at the solemn services of the Church.

At nine o'clock all were arranged in perfect order in the church; the men on one side, the women on the other. The Reverend Mr. Blanchet celebrated the august sacrifice, assisted by twenty acolytes. The piety of his parishioners contributed much to our edification.

On arriving at the Mission of St. Paul[5] of the Willamette, we proceeded at once to the residence of the Very Reverend Mr. Blanchet, who received us with the greatest kindness, and immediately placed at our disposal everything on the place. My first care was to seek some convenient locality where, according to the plan of our Very Reverend Father General, a mother mission could be established. For this purpose I made several unsuccessful excursions into the adjacent country. The most eligible situations were already occupied. The Methodists,[6] indeed, offered to sell me their Academy, which is a sufficiently large and handsome house, but entirely destitute of wood and arable land. In this perplexity Mr. Blanchet relieved me, by a generous and disinterested offer. He proposed to examine the property belonging to the mission, and take such portions of it as I should judge most proper for our projected establishment. We accordingly set out on this new excursion; but we had scarcely proceeded two miles when we came to a point uniting every desirable advantage. Picture to yourself an immense plain extending southward as far as the eye can reach; on one side the snowy crests of the gigantic Hood, Jefferson, or Molélis, and St. Helen's (the three highest peaks of Oregon), towering majestically upward, and losing themselves in the clouds; on the east a long range of distant hills, their blue-tinged summits melting, as it were, into the deep azure of the sky; on the west the limpid waters of two small lakes, on whose beautiful shores the beaver, the otter and the muskrat sport in careless security, heedless of our presence. The elevation on which we were standing, gradually sloping downward and forming a charming amphitheatre, extended to the borders of one of the lakes.

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[5] Dedicated January 6, 1840, by Vicar-General Blanchet; the first Catholic establishment in Oregon proper. Reverend M. Demers had been located in the Cowlitz valley, Washington (St. Francis Xavier), since October 13, 1839, but the log church at St. Paul was the oldest in the Pacific Northwest, having been built by the French inhabitants in 1836, in the expectation of the speedy arrival of priests.

[6] I cannot pass over one little incident: at the same time that the priests and nuns entered to establish themselves on the Willamette, several Protestant ministers and their wives were leaving the country in well-grounded despair, and going down the river on their way to the States. The great Methodist establishment, more than ten years old, was suppressed, and a little Protestant church, built by the Protestants who had just dismissed their minister, was offered to a Catholic priest. (From Father De Smet's manuscript journal.)

The Methodist mission in the Willamette valley was established in the fall of 1834 by Jason and Daniel Lee. It was closed in 1844, and all property sold; but according to the dates on record, the transfers were made before Father De Smet's arrival. "Thus," says Bancroft, "ends the history of ten years of missionary labor, in which nothing was done that ever in the least benefited the Indians, but which cost the missionary society of the Methodist Episcopal Church a quarter of a million dollars."

I hesitated not a moment in selecting this spot for the mother mission of St. Francis Xavier. The sweet recollections of our first establishment on the Missouri returned to my mind; and the remembrance of the rapid progress of the Mission of St. Stanislaus, near St. Ferdinand, whose branches now extend over the greater part of Missouri, Ohio, Louisiana, reaching even the Rocky Mountains, and penetrating to the western boundary of America, led me to breathe a fervent prayer, that here also might be formed a station, whence the torch of faith would diffuse its cheering light among the benighted tribes of this immense territory. We have also a fine view of the Willamette river, which in this place makes a sudden bend, continuing its course amidst dense forests, which promise an almost inexhaustible supply of materials for the construction of our mission-house. In no part of this region have I met with a more luxuriant growth of pine, fir, elm, ash, oak, buttonball [sycamore] and yew trees. The intervening country is beautifully diversified with shadowy groves and smiling plains, whose rich soil yields abundant harvests, sufficient for the maintenance of a large establishment. Besides these advantages, there are a number of springs on one side of the hill, one of which is not more than 100 yards from the house, and it will probably be of great use hereafter. Having now made choice of the locality, we commenced without delay the erection of the buildings. The first thing to be done was to clear the ground by cutting away the underbrush and isolated trees, after which, with the aid of the inhabitants, we constructed three wooden buildings, covered by a single roof of ninety feet; these were to serve as workshops for the brother blacksmith, carpenter and joiner.

Besides these, a house, forty-five by thirty-five feet, is now under way. It is to be two stories, and will be the dwelling-house of the missionaries.

We arrived in the Oregon Territory during the prevalence of a disease (bloody flux) which was considered contagious, though the physicians attributed it to the unwholesome properties of the river water. Numbers of savages fell victims to it, especially among the Chinooks and the Indians of the Cascades, large parties of whom encamped along the banks of the river, on their way to Vancouver, to obtain the aid of a physician. Those who could not proceed were abandoned by their friends; and it was truly painful to see these poor creatures stretched out and expiring on the sand. The greater part of our sailors, and three of the Sisters, were attacked by the pestilence; the Reverend Father Accolti also experienced its terrible effects; for myself, I was obliged to keep my bed during fifteen long days, and to observe a rigorous diet. But the captain of our vessel was the greatest sufferer. The disease attacked him so violently that I seriously fear he will never again return to the cherished family — the affectionate wife and children, of whom he used daily to speak with so much tenderness. He was a worthy man — an experienced and skilful navigator; I esteemed him highly, although I could not forbear blaming him for the little courage he had shown in repressing the profane language of one of the passengers, who, from the time of his embarkation until we landed him at Fort Vancouver, had never ceased to offend our ears by his horrid oaths. The Almighty has denounced his curse against the blasphemer; and sooner or later it will fall upon him. Poor *Infatigable,* I tremble for thy fate.

The winter was rapidly approaching, and notwithstanding my weak state, I could not resist my pressing desire to visit once more my dear Indians of the mountains, who, on their side, await my return with the greatest impatience, as I was informed by the Reverend Father Mengarini, who had come to meet me.

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On the 9th of September the good sisters commenced instructing the women and children, who were preparing for their first communion. As their house was not yet habitable, they were obliged to give their instructions in the open air. In three days' time they had already nineteen pupils, from sixteen to sixty years of age, all of whom came from a distance, bringing with them provisions for several days, and sleeping in the woods, exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather. It is easy to conceive by this how eager these poor people are for instruction. Each day the sisters devote six hours to teaching them the usual prayers and manner of making the sign of the cross. On one occasion it was discovered that a woman had remained two days without food; the dogs had devoured her little provision, and, lest she should miss the instruction, she was unwilling to go home for another supply. It is past belief how these Indian women cherish and respect the sisters and what thankfulness they show them; some bring them melons, others potatoes, butter, eggs, etc.

The convent having as yet neither doors nor sashes, owing to the scarcity of mechanics, some of these good Sisters were seen endeavoring to handle the plane, others glazing, painting the windows and doors, etc. They were the more ardently desirous for the completion of their new habitation, as already thirty Canadian pupils had been offered them; and thus would they be enabled to procure the means of giving a gratuitous support and protection to the hapless orphans of the forests. These poor children, rescued from their destitute condition and placed under the benign care of the kind Sisters, would enjoy the blessings of a Christian education and become, one day, co-operators in the mission. But to effect this and to realize the cheering hopes it holds forth, funds must be raised to provide the necessary clothing for the orphans, as the profits arising from the school will not be more than sufficient to defray the expenses of their board. I here give you the brilliant prospectus of their academy. Per quarter, 100 pounds flour, twenty-five pounds pork, or thirty-six of beef, one sack of potatoes, four pounds hogs' lard, three gallons peas, three dozen eggs, one gallon salt, four pounds candles, one pound tea, four pounds rice.

The Sisters took possession of their convent in the month of October; a few days after, their chapel was solemnly consecrated by the Reverend Mr. Blanchet; and they have since enjoyed the happiness of assisting every day at the holy sacrifice of the mass, offered up at their simple altar by one of the missionaries stationed at St. Francis Xavier. They have also twice had the consolation of presenting at the table of the Lord the little band of fervent neophytes,[7] whom they had prepared with so much care for this solemn action. This success in so short a time has induced us to conceive the project of founding another house of this order in Oregon City [Cuhute in the English version]. Monsieur Blanchet and Father De Vos think that the departure of the Protestant ministers, on account of their fruitless labors, renders this an auspicious moment for the establishment of a religious house. The station of St. Mary of the Willamette would furnish occupation sufficient for twelve Sisters, but unfortunately they are but six in number. We learn with pleasure that it is the intention of Monseigneur Blanchet to visit Europe immediately after his consecration,[8] in order to obtain, if possible, twelve more of these zealous and devoted women for the mission. God grant he may succeed; and that the want of pecuniary means may not oppose an insurmountable obstacle to the generous sacrifice, which, we are all well assured, the pious Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame are disposed to make again in our behalf.

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[7] Fr. une trentaine de femmes.

[8] Fr. pour y être consacré. Right Reverend F. N. Blanchet was consecrated in Montreal in the course of the year 1844.

[9] On the 3d of October [1844] I left the [regular] mission of St. Paul and our new [Jesuit] establishment called St. Francis Xavier, after having thanked and taken farewell of the Very Reverend Mr. Blanchet and of my dear brothers in Jesus Christ. I reached Vancouver on the 5th, just in time to take my place, with the Governor's permission, in a barge,[10] manned by eight men, which was starting for Walla Walla. The next day we camped near Cape Horn, a rock which rises from the middle of the river in the form of a sugar loaf. As far as this cape, the river may be navigated freely by ships drawing fourteen feet of water. On the 7th we carried our goods over the portage to the head of the Cascades. The distance from this point to the Dalles is about forty miles and no obstacles are encountered on the way. We passed by several basaltic islands, where the savages deposit their dead on scaffolds or in huts made of split cedar planks, covered with mats. This is to preserve them from the rapacity of wolves, who in this region have the same tastes as the hyenas of Barbary. Between Wappatoo Island, at the mouth of the Willamette, and the sea, the corpses are generally deposited in canoes which are covered in like manner. Certain rocky islets, called the Islands of the Dead, are covered with coffins of this kind.

At the Dalles I was politely invited to come and take dinner and supper with Messieurs the Protestant ministers.[11] On the 20th I arrived at Fort Walla Walla, where I was cordially and civilly received by Mr. [Archibald] McKinlay, in charge of the post. I employed several days here in making all my preparations for the rest of the journey; for I had twenty horses to buy, and as many saddles and bridles to get made. On the 28th I took farewell of the amiable McKinlay family, thanking them most sincerely for their kindness to us, and for the assistance which they had so liberally lavished upon us. I went a few days ahead of Reverend Father M., in order to send him the cattle and extra horses that I had bought. An Iroquois and a Canadian, from Colville, served as my guides. Though the season was well advanced, the weather seemed still inclined to favor us. The first night we encamped on the Walla Walla river. The next day we crossed the Lewis or Nez Percé river, one of the largest tributaries of the Columbia. The higher branches of this river, which I have crossed in my two journeys to the mountains, come down from the angle formed by the Rocky and Snowy Mountains, between the forty-second and forty-fourth degrees and near the sources of the Colorado, Platte, Yellowstone, and Missouri rivers. From the base of the Snowy range it runs westerly to the Blue Mountains, where it traverses one of its chains near the forty-third degree of latitude and is joined by Salmon river. Its course thence is northwest as far as the junction with the Columbia, receiving in its course the Malade, the Wapticacos or North Branch, the Kooskooske from the east, the Malheur, Powder, and Brulé from the west, and a great number of smaller tributaries on both sides.

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[9] The account here given of the period between October 3d and November 6, 1844, is taken from a manuscript journal. This journey is not described in any of the published works, but the incidents are largely transferred to a journey over the same ground in 1846; see hereafter.

[10] This statement is at variance with the itinerary prepared for publication by Father De Smet in 1854, where it is said that he made this journey on horseback from the establishments on the Willamette.

At the crossing of the Nez Percé we found a small camp of the Indians called Palooses, belonging to the tribe of the Sapetans or Nez Percés. On the high plain between this river and the Spokan we found abundance of sagebrush, as well as bunch-grass, excellent for horses. Twice we camped on the borders of beautiful little lakes, covered with wild-fowl. On the 2d of November we reached the Spokan river, coming from the southeast. I have made a map of the headwaters of this interesting river. I have called the two streams, hitherto unknown on the maps, which form the great Cœur d'Alène lake, whence the Spokan river derives its waters, by the names of St. Ignatius and St. Joseph. They in turn are formed by a great number of branches, the four principal of which are known to-day by the names of the four Evangelists; and the various mountain streams which form these last bear the names of all the Catholic hierarchy of the United States. I have moreover counted forty-eight little lakes, lying at the base of the mountains, which are named after the Venerables of the Company of Jesus. The Mission of the Sacred Heart[12] lies nearly in the center of this system. The head of this river therefore forms a fine Catholic group — may the inhabitants of that region be worthy of the fair names which environ them.

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[11] A Methodist mission at the Dalles had been started in 1838 by Reverends Daniel Lee and H. K. W. Perkins, as a branch of the establishment on the Willamette. Lee left in August, 1843, and was followed in the late summer of 1844 by Perkins, who was succeeded by Reverend A. F. Waller.

We were fortunate enough to find a ford whereby to cross the Spokan river; for all the savages were already away to their various winter quarters. Then climbing to a lofty plateau, a few miles' gallop brought us to a rich and beautiful valley, in which is a Presbyterian mission,[13] established a few years ago. My two good guides, the Iroquois and the Canadian, left me at the foot of the great Mountain of the Kalispels, to proceed on their way toward Colville. On the 5th I crossed the mountain, which is ascended by a crooked and difficult trail on the eastern side, but is easy of access from the west. Here I found myself in company with some of the hands from Fort Colville, who had seventeen pack-horses to manage. Darkness came upon us in the forest, but we worked ourselves out, with much difficulty and misery; two of the pack-horses from Colville, and one of mine, were lost, but we found them again the next day. We camped toward nine in the evening, on the shore of Lake De Boey, which was literally covered with wild swans, geese and ducks. One of the hunters fired off his gun over the lake, and the innumerable multitude of birds rose in a mass, the beating of their wings resembling the deep sound which ordinarily accompanies an earthquake.

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[12] For founding of this mission, see note, p. 377.

[13] That on the Chemakane branch of Spokan river, established in 1839, by Reverends Elkinah Walker and Cushing C. Eells and their wives. After the downfall of the Presbyterian missions, both settled in the Willamette valley, and were among the founders of the Pacific University.

On the 6th, Reverend Father Hoeken came to meet me, accompanied by several of the Kalispels of the Bay, among whom I had proposed two years before to establish a mission, but the approach of the snowy season had compelled me to defer the examination of the spot and the plan of building, until the following spring. They displayed every mark of friendship and joy at my return among them; they conducted me in triumph to their camp, and received me there amidst volleys of musketry and the sounding of trumpets. It would be impossible to describe the feelings of my heart at thus meeting with the first band of my dear neophytes and children in God, and to represent to you the real joy which animated them on this occasion. How much had we not to communicate to each other! I gave them some little and to them interesting details of the vast countries through which I had traveled in order to promote the interest and welfare of the Indians, since I bade them farewell, that is, within fifteen months. I had crossed the great American desert, and passed through many warlike, nomadical nations, extending from the Pacific Ocean to the frontier of the State of Missouri. I had traveled over the United States from New Orleans to Boston — visited Louisville, Cincinnati, Pittsburg, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Washington and New York — crossed the Atlantic — seen a great part of Ireland and England — the whole of Belgium, Holland and France. From Marseilles I had passed by Genoa, the city of palaces, Leghorn and Civita Vecchia, to visit the capital of the Christian world. From Rome I had gone to Antwerp, and then, sailing round Cape Horn, touching at Chile and Peru, and having twice crossed the Equator, I had at length disembarked at Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia, and had the happiness to embrace, on the 6th of November [1844], my dear neophytes, who had prayed so fervently for me, that, during all these long voyages, by sea and land, passing through so many different climates, and at all seasons of the year, I had not been troubled either by sickness or any untoward accident. Glory to God for so special a protection, and a thousand thanks to the good Indians who, from the moment of my departure until my return, had not ceased to invoke, morning and evening, the blessing and assistance of heaven on its unworthy servant.

The details which the young missionary gave me respecting their present dispositions are too interesting to be here omitted; and I give them in proof of the divine grace over the hearts of this well-disposed people. All that I had recommended to them in the visits I paid them in 1841–2, had been strictly complied with. "The first thing," says Father Adrien Hoeken in a letter home, "which struck me on my arrival among them, was a truly brotherly love and perfect union, which animated the whole tribe and seemed to make them but one family. They manifest great love, obedience and respect for their chiefs, and what is still more admirable, they all, as the chiefs themselves declare, speak and desire but one and the same thing. These chiefs are as much the real fathers of their people as is a good superior the father of a religious community. The chiefs among the Kalispels speak calmly, but never in vain; the instant they intimate their wish to one of their followers, he sets to work to accomplish it. Is any one involved in difficulties — is he in want or sickness — or does he wish to undertake a journey, whether long or short — he consults his chief, and shapes his conduct in accordance with the advice he receives. Even with regard to marriage, the Indians consult their chiefs, who sanction or postpone or disapprove of it, according as they deem it conducive, or otherwise, to the happiness of the parties. A man who had a hereditary ailment would not obtain a marriage permit. "Because," say the chiefs, "the village would otherwise soon be filled up with people of that kind, and they would never listen to reason." If such a rule prevailed in the civilized world, would we see so many degenerates? And would so many establishments be required to keep them in? The chief, in quality of father, endeavors to provide for the support of his people. It is he, consequently, who regulates hunting, fishing, and the gathering of roots and fruit. All the game and fish are brought to his lodge, and divided into as many shares as there are families. The distribution is made with rigid impartiality. The old, the infirm, the widow, all receive their share equally with the hunter. Is not this something like the return of the golden age — those happy times when everything was held in common and all had, as the apostle informs us, but one heart and one soul? Complaints, murmurings and backbiting are here unknown; blasphemy has never been uttered by an Indian: there are not even words in his language to express it." On the arrival of the Black-robe, the great chief explained to him, with patriarchal simplicity, their manner of life. "We are ignorant," he added, "but now that we have the happiness to have a Black-robe among us, we will listen to his voice and obey it; whatever changes he may deem necessary to make, we will cheerfully submit."

The Black-robe confirmed and approved all the good practices and customs he found established in this little corner of the world, where, notwithstanding their poverty, the Indians all seemed contented and happy. It is really affecting to hear them speak of the darkness in which they had been buried; and to see them now exulting in the light of the gospel and the knowledge of the Christian virtues, which they cherish, and by which their hearts seem to be inflamed. Their whole ambition consists in listening with docility to the word of God, and in being able thoroughly to understand and recite their prayers. Piety is what a young man seeks in her who is to be his future wife—and what a young woman desires to find in him who is to become her husband. In their leisure hours they surround and, if I may be allowed the expression, besiege their missionary. To the day they would add the night, if he could bear the fatigue, in speaking of heavenly things. Pride and human respect are absolutely unknown to them. How often have we not seen gray-headed old men and even chiefs sit down by the side of children ten or eleven years old, who would teach them their prayers, and explain to them the figures of the Catholic Ladder,[14] with all the gravity becoming a teacher; and give to the explanation, for one or two hours, all the attention of obedient pupils. In seasons of scarcity, when the fishing or hunting has failed, or in other misfortunes, they manifest no signs of impatience. They are quiet and resigned, receiving them as punishments for their sins; while their success they attribute to the bounty of God and render to him all the glory of it. One day the Black-robe was praising a young hunter for his skill. He blushed, and replied, smiling, "I am no hunter at all. I pray, and when the Great Spirit sends a deer my way, I let fly at him and he is dead."

The usual place of residence of the Kalispels—that in which the Reduction of St. Ignatius[15] is now established — is an extensive prairie, called the Bay of the Kalispels, thirty or forty miles above the mouth of Clark or Flathead river. A beautiful grotto exists in the neighborhood of the mission, which I have named the grotto of Manresa,[16] in honor of our holy founder. It is very large and might, at a small expense, be fitted up for a church. May the Indians gather in crowds into this new Manresa, and after the example of their patron, St. Ignatius, be penetrated with a feeling sense of heavenly things, and inflamed with the love of God!

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[14] A chart, invented by F. N. Blanchet in 1839, for the more convenient instruction of the Indians, "representing on paper the various truths and mysteries of religion in their chronological order."

I might easily have forgotten, amongst our good Kalispels, that the season was already far advanced, and that I must make haste to reach St. Mary's before winter. On the 8th therefore I made my preparations, when toward evening a little deputation appeared, which the Cœur d'Alène tribe had sent to find me among the Kalispels. They had feared, and with reason, that I did not mean to come to them very soon, because of the behavior of some of their chiefs toward the Black-robe, and this was their message:

"Father Pierre, our chiefs speak to thee, we bring thee their words. We heard that thou hadst crossed the big water to see thy children of the mountains again, and our hearts were very glad at the news. We had spoken often of Father Pierre, since he left us, and we thought we would be the first to see thee. This thought made us very glad. But we have learned that thy heart is not the same toward us, and this news makes us sorry. It is true, Father, thou hast no cause to be much pleased with us, for some among us have done very wrong; but the Great Spirit has punished us, and this makes us think that he will not reject us. We have lost our head chief and several others this year, besides a number of children, who died before they could be baptized. This last appeared to us the greater loss, and made us think that the Great Spirit wished to show us, by punishing us in this way, that it is a great evil to forget his baptism. Now that we are all together again at the village of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we try to satisfy the Black-robe, or rather to satisfy our Father who is in heaven; also we are trying to get our hearts right for our first communion. To help us in this, our Black-robe speaks to us four times each day, and our chiefs almost all day and part of the night; several of us are to have that happiness on the first great day of Mary of the next moon, and perhaps all the others by Christmas. Thou knowest better than we, Father, that those are two very great days, and that of the first communion the greatest of our life; come and see us, then, to witness our happiness. Oh! if thou couldst be among thy children on that day, it seems to us that we would have nothing more to wish for. We wish to show thee that we know now that the greatest good that thou couldst do us, was to show us the way to heaven, as thou didst do, and to give us Black-robes to keep us walking in it; and to show thee that it is not with our words alone that we love thee, but with our hearts; for we wish at present to do what our fathers may tell us; those are the last words of our hearts. Now, Father Pierre, we ask only one thing, that thou wilt come thyself to say whether the Cœur d'Alènes love thee as thou wouldst have them. We have spoken."

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[15] See p. 474.

[16] A town in Catalonia, where, in a cavern now called the Cueva de San Ygnacio, Ignatius Loyola "lived for a year, fasting and submitting himself to the severest penances, constantly gazing at the shrine of the Virgin of Montserrat, who, he asserted, encouraged him in his austerities."

On the 9th I bade farewell to Father Hoeken and his small but interesting colony of about 300 persons; 200 being away on the winter hunt.[17] I yielded with pleasure to the urgent solicitations of the Cœur d'Alènes, the more readily that the season seemed still to permit the passage of the lofty mountain-range which separates them from the Flatheads. The three Cœur D'Alène deputies and two of the Kalispels accompanied me. The day was fine and the trail easy; toward noon we skirted a beautiful little lake, which I named De Nef, in memory of one of the great friends and benefactors of the mission.

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[17] The following incident and narrative of the attempted journey to the Flatheads are from the manuscript journal. Other incidents of the same journey were published in Letter XXI of the Oregon Missions.

On the 10th, the sun rose majestically and everything promised a fine day; but all these fair appearances disappeared in threatening reddish clouds, and soon after the first snow began to fall in great flakes, and the rain that followed soaked us to the skin. We crossed the Spokan river at the foot of the great rapids, and kept the road until sunset. It rained heavily, but the stream-beds in the elevated plain that we had to cross were still dry. We camped by a little spring that we found by the way. The rain continued all night. I could only accommodate two persons in my tent — the three others made themselves some kind of shelter out of bark. They replenished the fire from time to time, and rested wondrous well — I took their word for this.

It continued to rain and snow all day on the 11th. We set out, however, hoping to be able to reach the mission; but the trail had become so slippery, along the sides of the high hills which we had to cross, that we barely made twenty miles. A large part of this desert is more prairie than forest, dotted with red pines, 100 to 200 yards apart, and here and there with fine little bunches of spruce. We camped by a pond, and as our provisions were nearly gone, the Indians roasted a goose that they had picked up on the road, half eaten by crows. We struck camp early on the 12th, in a blizzard or *pouderie* of snow. We reached the summit of a rather high mountain through a thick forest, where the snow that fell off the branches inconvenienced us greatly, and our horses slid and stumbled at almost every step on the narrow winding path. About two in the afternoon we found ourselves on the banks of St. Joseph's river, the southern fork that feeds the great Cœur d'Alène lake, and an hour later I was in the village of the Sacred Heart, with Reverend Father Point and the coadjutor brother, and surrounded by some 500 Cœur d'Alènes, who ran up in crowds to shake hands and welcome me among them. I returned thanks to divine Providence, which had brought me through.

The whole tribe was actuated by a common spirit of fervor and zeal, and was preparing with the greatest assiduity to make the first communion, at Christmas, in a worthy manner. From morning to evening, and even in the night, nothing was heard throughout the camp but the recitation of prayers and the singing of canticles. They added daily to my consolation and joy.

On the 19th I left the Mission of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, accompanied by four Indians to serve me as guides and hunters as far as St. Mary's. The rain and snow had not ceased for several days, and were still falling. They even increased, but after all kinds of difficulties and hardships, caused by the bad weather, we found ourselves on the 27th, after traversing the valley of St. Ignatius, almost at the foot of the mountain. For several days we now wound through thick woods and along the side of cliffs, among the most prodigious cedars. I doubt if Lebanon ever bore any more majestic, or any as mysterious. The silence of these places is unearthly.

Presently we met two Nez Percés, who were just down from the mountains. They gave us a most terrifying description of the state of the trail. In view, therefore, of the unremitting snowfall, we concluded that the passage was at present impracticable and impossible; moreover, the waters were now coming down from the mountains so fast and in such volume, that we thought of nothing but of returning in haste. We were confronted by a new deluge; the little brooks of the day before were now swollen torrents, rushing uproariously down. They arrested us continually, to make bridges or throw trees across, and unload and load again our pack-animals. After endless miseries, tumbles and headers, we at last came again to the St. Ignatius river, which had risen over ten feet, and was carrying down great masses of tree-trunks. It was not crossed without the greatest danger. Once I found myself under water, and under my mule; but I held fast to my beast, which dragged me to the farther shore. We camped for the night near the large cross planted on the territory of the chief Paulin. The river was still several feet below the top of the bank, and we all lay down to sleep without the least uneasiness; but toward midnight one of my men was surprised and amazed to find both his legs in the water. He put his head out of the tent, and lost no time in giving the alarm to his companions. It was, in fact, high time; we found ourselves surrounded by water, as by an immense lake. The plain was flooded throughout its entire extent of some seventy miles. I had barely got on my shoes and cassock and tied up my baggage and provisions, when I found myself in water up to the knees. But here, as in a hundred other places, Providence had furnished us a means of escape; there were two infirm little canoes of bark at the precise spot where we had encamped, and by their means we were enabled to take refuge, with arms and baggage, though all soaked, upon an eminence two miles away. Our horses and mules had made their way to the mountain-side during the night, where there was still abundant grass. We elected one of the Cœur d'Alènes to go to the mission with the news of our distress, and two days later, five canoes, under two of the chiefs, came to our rescue and carried us back to the village. The savages seemed to rejoice in the mishaps that had brought me to them again, and manifested the same cordiality and gladness with which they had received me the first time.

On the 4th of December, I started off again to try to reach the Flatheads, by way of Clark's Fork. On the 8th four Kalispels took me, with two canoes, and we ascended the river unhindered for four days. When we reached the great lake, the ice began to impede our progress. We were constantly having to land, to re-gum the thin bark of which our canoes were composed. Thus I found myself stopped for the second time. All navigation had ceased a month before — my pilots declared that to advance was to expose ourselves to imminent danger. I had learned by a letter just received from Father Mengarini that he had only escaped with the greatest difficulty from the snow and the water, and that twelve of his horses had perished in the "evil forest." One of the Kalispels offered to carry a message to St. Mary's, on snowshoes — so I wrote to Father Mengarini, saying, among other things, "I have done what I could, with prudence, to come to you; but I have found insurmountable barriers in the snows of the Cœur d'Alène mountains and the overflowed rivers, and now finally the ice stops me on Clark's Fork. I find myself frustrated in my most earnest desire, that of seeing the mother mission once more — of embracing my dear brothers in Jesus Christ, and pouring out upon the hearts of our dear good Flatheads all the attachment and godly love that I bear them. Tell them all sorts of things for me; I shall pass but a sad winter away from them. Tell them that I hope the Lord will grant me the favor of seeing them and taking their hands at the beginning of next spring; for as soon as the river is navigable I shall set out once more."

I was not long in descending the river, and on the 17th I reached the Kalispels' winter quarters. They seemed to have nothing more pressing to do than to procure me the best lodge in the camp, and to make all arrangements to make my stay among them as agreeable and comfortable, as the place and their poor circumstances permitted.

I shall always remember with pleasure the winter of 1844–5, which I had the happiness of spending among these good Indians. The place for wintering was well chosen, picturesque, agreeable and convenient. The camp was placed near a beautiful waterfall, caused by Clark river being blocked up by an immense rock, through which the waters, forcing narrow passages, precipitate themselves. A dense and interminable forest protected us from the north winds, and a countless number of dead trees standing on all sides furnished us with abundant fuel for our fires during the inclement season. We were encircled by ranges of lofty mountains, whose snow-clad summits reflected in the sun their brightness on all the surrounding country.

At the beginning of winter, as soon as the snow begins to fall in abundance, thousands of deer come down from the mountains. Sometimes the snow attains a thickness of two and three feet, and when the surface is frozen, it often happens that forty hunters will kill 300 in a day. You may judge of the great numbers of deer that fill the valleys and low places in winter. Where we were encamped we lived entirely on the chase. But if the snow is light, the Indians go hungry, and though the ground is frozen they have recourse to the Camas-root, which is very abundant in that region, and which the natives call *Sxâaolot.*[18]

The place for wintering being determined, the first care of the Indians was to erect the house of prayer. While the men cut down fir trees, the women brought bark and mats to cover them. In two days this humble house of the Lord was completed — humble and poor indeed, but truly the *house of prayer,* to which pure, simple, innocent souls repaired, to offer to the Great Spirit their vows and the tribute of their affections. Here the missionaries continued with care and diligence their instructions preparatory to baptism. How consoling was it to see ourselves surrounded by this fervent band, who had renounced the chase of the buffalo — a pleasure so attracting to an Indian — and had come from various parts of the country to place themselves under our direction, in the well-founded hope of being speedily regenerated in the saving waters of baptism. They had already learned their prayers and all those things which it was necessary they should practice. They applied with ardor to become acquainted with the nature and obligations of the sacrament of regeneration and the dispositions required for its worthy reception.

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[18] Apparently in the Kalispel or Pend d'Oreille language. In a Cœur d'Alène vocabulary, Father De Smet gives the name for the Camas as Sxa-o-lo-it-xoa.

The great festival of Christmas, the day on which the little band[19] was to be added to the number of the true children of God, will never be effaced from the memory of our good Indians. The manner in which we celebrated midnight mass may give you an idea of our festival. The signal for rising, which was to be given a few minutes before midnight, was the firing of a pistol, announcing to the Indians that the house of prayer would soon be open. This was followed by a general discharge of guns in honor of the birth of the Infant Savior, and 300 voices rose spontaneously from the midst of the forest, and entoned in the language of the Pend d'Oreilles the beautiful canticle: "*Du Dieu puissant tout annonce la gloire.*"—"The Almighty's glory all things proclaim." In a moment a multitude of adorers were seen wending their way to the humble temple of the Lord — resembling indeed the manger in which the Messiah was born. On that night, which all at once became bright as day, they experienced I know not what, that which made them exclaim aloud, "O God! I give thee my heart." Oh! I trust that the happy impression which this unwonted spectacle made upon their hearts will never be effaced.

Of what was our little church of the wilderness constructed? I have already told you — of posts fresh cut in the woods, covered over with mats and bark; these were its only materials. On the eve, the church was embellished with garlands and wreaths of green boughs; forming, as it were, a frame for the images which represent the affecting mysteries of Christmas night. The interior was ornamented with pine branches. The altar was neatly decorated, be-spangled with stars of various brightness, and covered with a profusion of ribbons — things exceedingly attractive to the eye of an Indian. At midnight I celebrated a solemn mass and the Indians sang several canticles suitable to the occasion. That peace announced in the first verse of the angelic hymn — the *Gloria* — "Peace on earth to men of good will," was, I venture to say, literally fulfilled to the Indians of the forest. A grand banquet, according to Indian custom, followed the first mass. Some choice pieces of the animals slain in the chase had been set apart for the occasion. I ordered half a sack of flour and a large boiler of sweetened coffee to be added. The union, the contentment, the joy and charity, which pervaded the whole assembly, might well be compared to the *agapé* of the primitive Christians.

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[19] Fr. 124 adults.

After the second high mass, all the adults, with the chiefs at their head, presented themselves in the church to receive baptism, the fulfilment of their longing desires. The old man and woman whom I baptized two years before were sponsors for all. The men were placed on the one side, according to the custom of Paraguay, and the women on the other. I was assisted during the ceremony by Father Hoeken, their worthy and zealous missionary. Everything was done in order and with propriety. Permit me to repeat here that I should be delighted could I but communicate to the zealous and fervent those pleasurable feelings — that overflowing of the heart, which one experiences on such occasions. Here, indeed, the Indian missionary enjoys his greatest consolations: here he obtains his strength, his courage, his zeal to labor to bring men to the knowledge of the true God, in spite of the poverty, the privations of every description, and the dangers with which he has to contend. Yes, surely, even in this life is the promise of the Savior fulfilled with regard to him, "Ye shall receive a hundredfold." The trifling things of the world he abandons are nothing to be compared with the blessings he finds in the wilderness. The priest does not address in vain to the Indians those beautiful words of the Roman ritual: "Receive this white garment," etc., "Receive this burning taper," etc. He may be certain that the greater number of his catechumens will wear that spotless garment — will preserve their baptismal innocence, to the hour of their death. When I have afterward asked them if they have not offended God? if their conscience does not reproach them with some fault? how often have I received this touching and consoling answer: "Oh, Father! in baptism I renounced sin, I try to avoid sin, the very thought of offending God frightens me!" The ceremonies of baptism were closed by a second instruction and by the distribution of beads, which the Indians are accustomed to say every evening in public.[20]

About three o'clock in the afternoon the solemn benediction of the blessed sacrament was given for the first time, immediately after which upward of fifty couples, many of whom were eighty years old, came forward to renew before the church their marriage promises. I could not help shedding tears of joy at witnessing this truly primitive simplicity, and the love and affection with which they pledged again their faith to each other. The last instruction was then given, and thanks were returned to God for all the blessings he had vouchsafed to shower upon them on this ever-memorable day. The recitation of prayers and the chanting of hymns were heard in all the lodges of the camp till the night was far advanced.

Fathers Mengarini and Zerbinati[21] (the last-mentioned Father has since died), had the consolation to see the whole tribe of the Flatheads, among whom they had been laboring, approach the holy table on this day. Twelve young Indians, taught by Father Mengarini, performed with accuracy several pieces of music, by the best German and Italian composers, during the midnight mass. Fathers Point and Joset had also the consolation of admitting for the first time nearly the entire tribe of the Cœur d'Alènes, on this auspicious day, to the holy communion. Father Point has given the particulars of this first communion in a letter, which has been published, and which you have, no doubt, read with pleasure. The Christmas of 1844 was, therefore, a great and glorious day in the Rocky Mountains.

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[20] "I have received sad news from the Pend d'Oreille nation, where I founded a mission in 1844. They write me that all the principal chiefs of this tribe have been killed by some hostile bands, belonging to the nation of the Blackfeet."—*Letter to Mrs. Parmentier, January, 1851.*

[21] Reverend Peter Zerbinati, S. J., came across the plains with Joset and Magri in 1843; was drowned September, 1845; the first Catholic priest to die in Montana.

I will close this already lengthy letter with a few words more concerning the Pend d'Oreilles of the Bay. Early in the spring of 1845 they began to build upon the spot selected for the reduction of St. Ignatius, and to open fields. On Ascension day of the same year Father Hoeken administered baptism to upward of a hundred adults. At my last visit, which I paid them in July, 1845, they had already put up fourteen log houses, besides a large barn, had the timber prepared for a church, and had upward of 300 acres in grain, enclosed by a substantial fence. The whole village, men, women and children, had worked most cheerfully. I counted thirty head of horned cattle — the squaws had learned to milk the cows and to churn; they had a few hogs and some domestic fowls. The number of Christians had doubled since Christmas, 1844.

A flour and sawmill, a few more plows, with other agricultural implements, and carpenter's tools, were much wanted in the village of St. Ignatius. All is to be commenced among these poor, good Indians, and to us they look for means and supplies, which we readily grant as far as we are able. Already was an appeal made to the generous and charitable Christians, and it is consoling for me to say, that appeal found an echo in the hearts of the friends of the Indians which enabled us to enlarge our missionary operations, and I may add that the grateful prayer of the Indians is daily ascending to the throne of the Almighty, to implore the blessings of heaven on their benefactors. In 1845 and 1846, several stations were formed, and the extensive mission of New Caledonia was commenced.

In the beginning of February, [1845] I set out to visit our different settlements and stations, and to form new ones among the neighboring tribes of our reductions. The entire surface of this region was then covered with snow five feet deep; and I was compelled to go from the Bay of Pend d'Oreilles to the Horse Plain, in a bark canoe, a distance of 250 miles.

I was among my dear Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles of the mountains, during the Paschal time, and had the great consolation of finding them replete with zeal and fervor in fulfilling the duties of true children of prayer. The solemn feast of Easter, all the Flatheads at St. Mary's devoutly approached the most blessed sacrament during my mass; and about 300 Pend d'Oreilles (the greater number adults), belonging to the station of St. Francis Borgia, presented themselves at the baptismal font. Five chiefs were among the number; the most distinguished are Stiettiedloodsho, or chieftain of the Braves; Selpisto, the head chieftain, and Chalax, that is to say the White Robe, surnamed the Juggler or great medicine man. The word "medicine man," in their language, is synonymous with juggler.

How consoling it is to pour the regenerating waters of baptism on the furrowed and scarified brows of these desert warriors — to behold these children of the plains and forests emerging from that profound ignorance and superstition in which they have been for so many ages deeply and darkly enveloped; to see them embrace the faith and all its sacred practices, with an eagerness, an attention, a zeal, worthy the pristine Christians.

Were I to give you the history of these chiefs, I should greatly exceed the limits I have proposed. Suffice it to say that these heroes of the Rocky Mountains have been for years the terror of their enemies. Chalax had acquired great celebrity as a juggler, and in predicting future events; if we may credit the Kalispels and the whites who have traveled in company with him, these prophecies have always been verified. He indicated the day, the place, and the number of Blackfeet who would attack their camp. Having interrogated him relative to this affair, he, with great simplicity and candor, replied: "I am called the great doctor, yet never have I given myself up to the practices of juggling, nor condescended to exercise its deceptions. I derive all my strength from prayer; when in a hostile country, I address myself to the Master of Life and offer him my heart and soul, entreating him to protect us against our enemies. A voice had already warned me of coming danger; I then recommend prudence and vigilance throughout the camp; for the monitory voice has never deceived me. I have now a favor to request: the mysterious voice calls me by the name of Chalax, and, if you will permit, I desire to bear that name until my death." I willingly consented, and then explained to him the ceremony of the white garment he was about to receive, in the holy sacrament of baptism. To the name of Chalax I affixed that of the prince of the apostles. This is the same chief who on my first visit to the mountains, aided by only sixty men, sustained during five days an obstinate struggle against 200 lodges of Blackfeet, whom he put to flight, leaving on the ground eighty men, whilst among the Flatheads only one man was wounded. He died three months later, the day after he was baptized.

With regret I parted from these good Indians and my beloved brothers in Jesus Christ, the Reverend Fathers Mengarini, Zerbinati, and four coadjutor brothers; who are laboring with indefatigable zeal in this portion of our Lord's vineyard.

As the snow was fast disappearing, the Kalispels of the Bay were awaiting my return. I re-entered my fragile canoe, guided by two Indians, and made all possible haste to descend Clark's river. You may judge of its impetuosity when I inform you that we were sixteen days ascending the river, and but four in descending the same. On returning to the Bay, accompanied by Reverend Father Hoeken and several chiefs, my first care was to examine the lands belonging to this portion of the tribe of Kalispels and select a fit site for erecting the new establishment of St. Ignatius.[22] We found a vast and beautiful prairie, three miles in extent, surrounded by cedar and pine, in the neighborhood of the cavern of New Manresa and its quarries, and a fall of water more than 200 feet, presenting every advantage for the erection of mills. I felled the first tree, and after having taken all necessary measures to expedite the work, I departed for Walla Walla, where I embarked in a small boat and descended the Columbia as far as Fort Vancouver.

The melting of the snow had occasioned a considerable freshet and our descent was very rapid. The place was indicated to me where, a few months previously, four travelers from the United States had miserably perished, victims of their own temerity and presumption. When advised to provide themselves with a guide, they answered they had no need of any; and when warned that the river was dangerous and deceptive, the pilot, with a scoffing boast, replied, "I am capable of guiding my barge, were it even across the infernal gulf." The monitor wished them a fortunate voyage, but at the same time trembled for their fate, saying: "This pilot is not a native Indian, he is not an Iroquois, nor even a Canadian." The turbulent stream soon engulfed its presumptuous and daring victims. They steered out into the midst of the river, and in an instant the canoe was borne along with the rapidity of lightning, leaving in its train a thick foam, caused by the violent plying of oars. Approaching the rapids, they fearlessly hurried onward. Alas, their fate was soon to be decided. Drawn by the eddy into the center of a whirlpool, vainly they struggled to extricate themselves — they beheld the dread abyss yawning to receive its prey! Yet an instant the ill-fated barge twirled upon the surface, and then sank amidst the despairing shrieks of the helpless crew, which the roaring waves rendered the more appalling, whilst the dismal sounds, reechoing from shore to shore, proclaimed a new disaster of the Columbia. Soon the waters resumed their wonted course, and left no trace of the sad catastrophe. This fatal spot might appropriately be designated Presumptive's Rapids; doubtless it will be a lesson to future boasters not to venture, without pilot or guide, upon this formidable tributary of the western ocean.

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[22] *Further history of the first Mission of St. Ignatius, among the Kalispels.*— This establishment was maintained for ten years by Father Hoeken, but in 1854 it was abandoned for a more favorable site, that of the present St. Ignatius Mission, a few miles from Selish station on the Northern Pacific railroad, at that time considered the territory of the Upper Pend d'Oreilles. The reasons for the change are thus given by Father Palladino: "It was subject to inundation at the melting of heavy snow-falls in the mountains, and, further, the missionaries having now acquired a better knowledge of the country, a more central position with reference to other tribes was deemed preferable, as greater good could be accomplished. Consequently, at the request of the Indians themselves, the mission was removed."

After a prosperous voyage of five days I debarked at Vancouver, where I had the happiness of meeting Father Nobili, who during eight months had applied himself to study the Indian language, while he exercised his sacred ministry among the Catholic employees of the fort and the Indians of the neighborhood. More than a tenth of the latter had been swept off by a mortal disease; happily, they all had the consolation of receiving baptism before they expired.

Father Nobili accompanied me in a Chinook canoe up the beautiful river of Multnomah or Willamette, a distance of about sixty miles, as far as the village of Champoeg, three miles from our residence of St. Francis Xavier. On our arrival all the fathers came to meet us, and great was our delight in being again reunited after a long winter season. The Italian fathers had applied themselves chiefly to the study of languages. Father Ravalli, being skilled in medicine, rendered considerable services to the inhabitants of St. Paul's Mission; for every dwelling contained several sick. Father Vercruysse, at the request of Right Reverend Bishop Blanchet, opened a mission among the Canadians who were distant from St. Paul's, and he succeeded in causing them to contribute to the erection of a new church, in a central location. Father De Vos is the only one of our fathers of Willamette who speaks English. He devotes his whole attention to the Americans, whose number already exceeds 4,000. There are several Catholic families, and our dissenting brethren seem well disposed; many among them are eager to be instructed in the Catholic faith.

Nowhere does religion make greater progress, or present brighter prospects for the future, than in Oregon Territory. The Very Reverend Mr. Demers, vicar-general and administrator of the diocese in the absence of the bishop, is preparing to build a brick cathedral. There is now being built, under his superintendence, a fine church at the Falls of the Willamette, where, three years ago, was commenced the first town of Oregon. This rising village numbers more than 100 houses. Several lots have been selected by the respectable Mr. McLoughlin, Governor for the Hudson Bay Company, west of the Rocky Mountains, for a convent and two schools. A Catholic church has been erected at Vancouver.

The Convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame is fast progressing, and it will be the finest building of Willamette. The church is eighty feet long, and proportionably wide; it is under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin. The nuns have already fifty boarders. The Bishop's College, under the management of the Very Reverend Mr. Bolduc, is very prosperous. The number of pupils has augmented; forty young men, chiefly half-breeds, are receiving a Christian education. Some years ago a church was erected at Cowlitz, and the inhabitants are now preparing to construct a convent under the direction of Reverend Mr. Langlois.

Our residence of St. Francis Xavier is completed; it will hereafter serve for a novitiate and seminary, to prepare young men for the missions.

Measures, which I trust will be realized, have been taken by our fathers for visiting during this year the numerous tribes inhabiting the Pacific coast north and south of the Columbia; where already the visits of the bishop and his grand vicar have been so productive of favorable results. The 17th of February, 1842, Bishop Blanchet thus wrote to the Bishop of Quebec: "God has deigned to bless our labors, and to fructify the divine word. The adorable name of Jesus has been announced to new nations of the north. Mr. Demers bent his steps to Fort Langley on Frazer's river, in which place he administered baptism to upwards of 700 children. Many of them already enjoy the precious fruits of regenerating grace."

In my preceding letters, I gave you the details of our missions among the mountains of the higher Oregon; of the conversion of two tribes, the Flatheads and the Cœur d'Alène or Pointed Hearts; of the first communion of the latter, and conversion of a large number of Kalispels of the Bay, on the solemn festival of Christmas. From 1839, when the mission was established, to July, 1845, the reverend Canadian missionaries baptized 3,000 persons. The number of Catholics residing at the different stations of the Honorable Hudson Bay Company in Oregon, together with the colonists of the same nation, amounts to several hundreds. By adding to these 2,857 baptized since 1841 in the different mountain missions, it gives us a total of more than 6,000 Catholics in Oregon. The diminutive grain of mustard is fast extending far and wide its branches over this once sterile and neglected region. In the month of June Father Nobili, accompanied by a novice brother, left Willamette to visit the tribes of New Caledonia. The Very Reverend Mr. Demers saw there in 1842–3 the following named tribes: Kameloups, the Atnans or Shouwapemoh, the Porteurs or

Ltaoten,[23] which names vary according to the different places where the tents are pitched. They affix the word ten which signifies people, i. e., Stelaoten, Nashkoten, Tchilkoten, Nakazeteoten. Reverend Mr. Demers had the consolation of baptizing 436 children among these tribes.

Such has since been the fervor and zeal of these poor Indians, that, though deprived of a priest, they have built three churches, hoping that a nepapayattok, or father, would settle among them.

Many Catholics reside in the different forts of this country. The honorable gentlemen of the Hudson Bay Company, although Protestants, were strongly interested in favor of these savages, and did all in their power to facilitate the introduction of a clergyman into this portion of their jurisdiction.

A few days after the departure of Father Nobili, who obtained a place in a barge belonging to the Honorable Hudson Bay Company, I started by land from St. Francis Xavier's with eleven horses laden with plows, spades, pickaxes, scythes and carpenters' implements. My companions were the good Brother McGil, from Ireland [J. B. McGean?], and two metis or mongrels [half-breeds]. We encountered many obstacles and difficulties among the Cascade Mountains owing to the water which at this season descends on every side in torrents and with irresistible fury upon the rocks, over which we were compelled to cross. In the narrow valleys between these mountains, the rhododendron displays all its strength and beauty; it rises to the height of fifteen or twenty feet. Entire groves are formed by thousands of these shrubs, whose clustering branches entwine themselves in beautiful green arches, adorned with innumerable bouquets of splendid flowers, varying their hues from the pure white to the deepened tint of the crimsoned rose.

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[23] This name is given variously as Ltaoten and Itcuten in different letters of Father De Smet's. Mackenzie, who met these Indians in 1793, gave their native name as Nagailer.

Our path was strewed with the whitened bones of horses and oxen, melancholy testimonies of the miseries endured by other travelers through these regions. We passed the foot of Mt. Hood, the most elevated of this stupendous chain. It is covered with snow, and rises 16,000 [12,225] feet above the level of the sea. Captain Wyeth, on beholding this ridge from the summit of the Blue Mountains, thus speaks of it in his journal:[24] "The traveler on advancing westerly, even at the distance of 160 miles, beholds the peaks of the Cascade Mountains. Several of them rise 16,000 feet above the level of the sea. Every other natural wonder seems to dwindle, as it were, into insignificance when compared to this. From one single spot I contemplated seven of these majestic summits extending from north to south, whose dazzling white and conic form resemble a sugar loaf."

We were twenty days going from the Willamette to Walla Walla, across desert and undulating lands, abounding in absinthium or wormwood, [sage brush] cactus, tufted grass, and several species of such plants and herbs as are chiefly found in a sterile and sandy soil. Game is scarce in these latitudes; however, we found large partridges and pheasants, aquatic fowls, small birds of various new kinds, hares and rabbits. Salamanders [horned toads?] swarm in sandy places, and armadilloes are not rare in the vicinity of the Great Dalles.

Fort Walla Walla is situated in latitude 46° 2′, and longitude 119° 30′. The sandy neighborhood of this settlement likens it to a little Arabia. The river Walla Walla discharges its waters a mile distant from the fort. The lowlands, when watered, are tolerably fertile, and produce maize, barley, wheat, potatoes and pulse of every kind. Cows and hogs are easily raised, and horses abound in this part of the country.

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[24] Father De Smet is apparently in error here. At any rate, the quoted passage is not to be found in the published journal of Nathaniel J. Wyeth.

Having already spoken to you of the Nez Percé and Spokan desert, I have nothing further to add relative to this dreary region. On advancing easterly toward the Blue Mountains, we find beautiful and fertile plains, interspersed with limpid and wholesome streams. The valleys are picturesque, covered with luxuriant prairies, and forests of pine and fir. The Nez Percés and Cayuses inhabit these delightful pastures. They are the most wealthy tribes in Oregon; even some private families possess 1,500 horses. The savages successfully cultivate potatoes, peas, corn, and several kinds of vegetables and fruits. No situation affords finer grazing for cattle; even in winter they find an abundance, nor do they need shelter from the inclemency of the weather. Snow is never seen, and the rains are neither destructive nor superabundant.

About the middle of July I arrived safely with all my effects at the Bay of the Kalispels. In my absence the number of neophytes had considerably increased. On the feast of the Ascension Father Hoeken had the happiness of baptizing more than 100 adults. Since my departure in the spring our little colony has built four houses, prepared materials for constructing a small church, and enclosed a field of 300 acres. More than 400 Kalispels, computing adults and children, have been baptized. They are all animated with fervor and zeal; they make use of the hatchet and plow, being resolved to abandon an itinerant life for a permanent abode.

The beautiful falls of the Columbia, called the Kettle Falls, in the vicinity of Fort Colville, are distant two days' journey from our new residence of St. Ignatius. From eight to nine hundred savages were there assembled for the salmon fishery. I repaired thither in time to spend with them the nine days preceding the feast of our holy founder. Within the last four years, considerable numbers of these Indians were visited by the "Black-gowns," who administered the sacrament of baptism. I was received by my dear Indians with filial joy and tenderness. I caused my little chapel of boughs to be placed on an eminence in the midst of the Indians' huts, where it might not inaptly be compared to the pelican of the wilderness surrounded by her young, seeking with avidity the divine word, and sheltering themselves under the protection of their fostering mother. I gave three instructions daily; the Indians assisted at them with great assiduity and attention.

Last year the feast of St. Ignatius proved for me a day of danger, trial and uneasiness. I love to recall it to my mind, for it terminated joyfully, and so gloriously that I know my companions can never forget it, and they will return lasting thanks to the Almighty for the display of his mercy. Without a chart or any knowledge of the mouth of the Columbia, we traversed, as if borne on angels' wings, the bar of this formidable river. This year I passed the feast of St. Ignatius amidst many occupations, but they were of such a nature as to console the missionary's heart, and repay him a hundredfold for the trifling privations, pains and fatigues he endures.

More than 100 children were presented for baptism, and eleven old men, borne to me on skins, seemed only awaiting the regenerating waters to depart home and repose in the bosom of their divine Savior. The eldest among them, an Okinagan, apparently about 100, and blind, addressed me in the following pathetic words: "My life has been long on earth, and my tears have not ceased to flow; even now I daily weep, for I have beheld all my children and early associates disappear. I find myself isolated among my own nation, as if I were in a strange land; thoughts of the past alone occupy me, and they are of a mournful and bitter nature. Nevertheless, I find consolation in remembering that I have avoided the company of the wicked. Never have I shared in their thefts, battles or murders. This blessed day, joy has penetrated the inmost recesses of my soul; the Great Spirit has taken pity on me, I have received baptism, I return him thanks for this favor, and offer him my heart and life."

A solemn mass was celebrated, during which the Indians chanted canticles in praise of God. The ceremonies of baptism followed, and all terminated in the most perfect order, to the great delight and edification of the savages. It was indeed a most imposing spectacle; all around contributed to heighten the effect. The noble and gigantic rock, the distant roar of the cataracts breaking in on the religious silence of that solitude, situated on an eminence overlooking the powerful Oregon river, and on the spot where the impetuous waters, freeing themselves from their limits, rush in fury and dash over a pile of rocks, casting upwards a thousand *jets d'eau,* whose transparent columns reflect in varied colors the rays of the dazzling sun.

There were besides the Skoyelpi or Chaudière Indians, the Sinpoils and the Zingomènes, and several Kalispels, Indians from the great lakes of the Columbia and Okinagans, accompanied me in the capacity of singers and catechists.

I gave the name of St. Paul to the Skoyelpi nation, and placed under the care of St. Peter the tribe inhabiting the shores of the great Columbia lakes, whither Father Hoeken is about to repair, to continue instructing and baptizing their adults. My presence among the Indians did not interrupt their fine and abundant fishery. An enormous basket was fastened to a projecting rock, and the finest fish of the Columbia, as if by fascination, cast themselves by dozens into the snare. Seven or eight times during the day these baskets were examined, and each time were found to contain about 250 salmon. The Indians, meanwhile, were seen on every projecting rock, piercing the fish with the greatest dexterity [with spears].

They who know not this territory may accuse me of exaggeration, when I affirm that it would be as easy to count the pebbles so profusely scattered on the shores, as to sum up the number of different kinds of fish which this western river furnishes for man's support. As the buffalo of the north, and deer from north to east of the mountains, furnish daily food for the inhabitants of those regions, so do these fish supply the wants of the western tribes. One may form some idea of the quantity of salmon and other fish, by remarking that at the time they ascend the rivers, all the tribes inhabiting the shores choose a favorable location, and not only do they find abundant nutriment during all the season, but, if diligent, they dry, and also pulverize and mix with oil a sufficient quantity for the rest of the year. Incalculable shoals of salmon ascend to the river's source, and there die in shallow water. Great quantities of trout and carp follow them, and regale themselves on the spawn deposited by the salmon in holes and still water. The following spring the young salmon descend toward the sea, and I have been told (I cannot vouch for the authenticity) that they never return until the fourth year. Six different species are found in the Columbia river.

I left Kettle Falls August 4th, accompanied by several of the nation of the Crees to examine the lands they have selected for the site of a village. The ground is rich and well suited for all agricultural purposes. Several buildings were commenced; I gave the name of St. Francis Regis to this new station, where a great number of the mixed race and beaver hunters have resolved to settle, with their families. The 6th I traversed the high mountains of the Kalispels, and toward evening reached the establishment of St. Ignatius. The Reverend Fathers Hoeken and Ravalli, with two lay brothers, superintend this interesting little settlement. These fathers likewise visit the different neighboring tribes, such as the Zingomènes, Sinpoils, Okinagans, the stations of St. Francis Regis, of St. Peter, and that of St. Paul, the Flatbows and the Kootenais. I purpose visiting these two tribes, who have never yet had the consolation of beholding a Black-robe among them. All these tribes number, on an average, about 500 souls each.

CHAPTER IV.[1]

EXPEDITION TO THE BLACKFEET COUNTRY — ST. IGNATIUS TO FORT AUGUSTUS.

Sets out for the Flatbow country — Meets Ogden in the woods — De Smet on the Oregon Question — The country and its products — The camas root — Fish festival of the natives — Dense forests — Precious metals and their bearing on the Indians' welfare — Meets Kootenais in Tobacco Prairie — Good trail to sources of Columbia — Starts to find the Blackfeet — Notes on bears — On Canadians — Is well fed — Wild scenery — Quotes much poetry — Bow river — Dreams, omens and more poetry — Comes upon an Assiniboin camp — They are untidy and their dogs steal — Porcupine lore — How to ride in the woods — Mineral deposits — The prairie ocean — Survey of the Indian field — Comes to Rocky Mountain House — Kindness of Harriote — Something about the Crees — A crafty medicine-man — Thirteen Blackfeet come in — A hard year for Blackfeet — Some of their traditions — Sets forth again in search of the main camp — Loses a bad interpreter and pursues a good one — Gives up and repairs to Fort Augustus.

Monseigneur:[2]

THE 9th of August I continued my route toward the country of the Arcs-à-plats [Flatbows]. The roads were still inundated by the great freshet. I preferred ascending the Clark or Flathead river in my bark canoe, and sent my horses across the forests bordering the river to await me at the great lake of the Kalispels. I had here a very agreeable and unexpected interview; as we approached the forests, several horsemen issued forth in tattered garments.

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[1] This chapter follows the English text of the *Oregon Missions*, and comprises Letters VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI and part of XIII of that work (Letters V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X and XII, *Missions de l'Orégon*), published as letters to Bishop Hughes and dated as by footnotes inserted at the proper places.

[2] Letter dated Station of the Assumption, Flatbow country, August 17, 1845.

The foremost gentleman saluted me by name, with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. I returned the gracious salutation, desiring to know whom I had the honor of addressing. A small river separated us, and with a smile he said, " Wait until I reach the opposite shore, and then you will recognize me." He is not a beaver hunter, said I to myself; yet under this tattered garb and slouched hat, I could not easily descry one of the principal members of the Honorable Hudson Bay Company, the worthy and respectable Mr. Ogden.[3] I had the honor and good fortune of making a voyage with him, and in his own barge, from Colville to Fort Vancouver in 1842; and no one could desire more agreeable society. It would be necessary for you to traverse the desert, to feel yourself insulated, remote from brethren, friends, to conceive the consolation and joy of such an encounter.

Mr. Ogden left England in the month of April last, accompanied by two distinguished [? engineer] officers. It was a source of great pleasure to receive recent news from Europe, but the Oregon question appeared to me somewhat alarming. It was neither curiosity nor pleasure that induced these two officers to cross so many desolate regions, and hasten their course toward the mouth of the Columbia. They were invested with orders from their Government to take possession of Cape Disappointment, to hoist the English standard, and erect a fortress for the purpose of securing the entrance of the river, in case of war.[4] In the Oregon question, John Bull, without much talk, attains his end, and secures the most important part of the country; whereas Uncle Sam loses himself in words, inveighs and storms! Many years have been passed in debates and useless contention, without one single practical *effort* to secure his real or pretended rights.[5] The poor Indians of Oregon, who alone have a right to the country, are not consulted. Their future destiny will be, undoubtedly, like that of so many other unfortunate tribes who, after having lived peaceably by hunting and fishing for centuries, will finally disappear, victims of vice and malady, under the rapacious influence of modern civilization.

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[3] See p. 384.

[4] Probably their orders in this regard were somewhat elastic. Father De Smet met them returning eastward the following spring; see p. 542. He there says their names were Ward and Vavasseur.

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[5] The following letter to Senator Benton, written about November 3, 1849, is of interest in this connection:

"Honorable Colonel Benton,

"Sir;

"Agreeably to your request, I have the honor of sending you the following statement of a fact that has fallen under my own cognizance. It occurred in the middle of June, 1846, on the war brig *Modeste* while lying before Fort Van Couver, on which I had been kindly invited to partake of a dinner, in company with the officers of the war vessel *Fisgard*, and several gentlemen from the fort.

"Among various topics of discussion, while at table, mention was made of the Oregon question, of which the officers appeared to be anxiously awaiting the result. One of the principal officers remarked, that if the question did not come to a speedy and favorable issue, they would take possession, not of the whole of Oregon only, but moreover add California to the conquest. I in my turn remarked that this was a dream not easily realized, for supposing they did take Oregon for the moment, could not twenty or twenty-five thousand Americans cross the Rocky Mountains, early in the next summer, and almost without a blow, wrest from them the entire Oregon. As to California, I remarked that it was my idea, that the Yankees were there already, and that they, the British, would probably come too late; for that the Yankees, who never sleep over such bargains, would be master over the whole country, before the Britisher would land one single soldier on its shores. 'Are you a Yankee?' asked the captain, somewhat warmly. 'Not a born one, Captain,' was my reply, 'but I have the good luck of being a naturalized American, for these many years past — and in these matters all my good wishes are for the side of my adopted country — if California is to fall into either hands, I hope the star-spangled banner may wave triumphant there.'"

This incident is a strange reminder of a similar one so often related in the life of Doctor Whitman, but which historians generally agree in considering mythical. See Nixon, *How Marcus Whitman Saved Oregon*, p. 105.

The *Fisgard* was a frigate of forty-two guns, manned by a crew of 350, Captain J. A. Duntz. Bancroft says she "came to remain for the summer, or so long as the war-cloud threatened."

The route from the great Kalispel lake to the Flatbow country is across dense forests and much obstructed by fallen trees, morasses, frightful sloughs, from which the poor horses with much difficulty extricate themselves; but having finally surmounted all these obstacles, we contemplate from an eminence a smiling and accessible valley, whose mellow and abundant verdure is nourished by two lovely lakes, where the graceful Kootenai river winds in such fantastic beauty, that it serves to make the weary traveler not only forget his past dangers, but amply compensates him for the fatigues of a long and tiresome journey.

This section of the valley of Arcs-à-plats greatly resembles the two valleys of the Cœur d'Alènes; same fertility of soil, lakes, pastures, willow and pine groves; elevated mountains covered to the very summit with dense forests of trees, low lands, in which the towering cedar displays all its majesty and splendid foliage; and, as Racine says:

> "Elèvent aux cieux
> Leurs fronts audacieux!"

The river is, in this place, deep and tranquil; moving along with a tardy pace until aroused from its inertness by the universal thaw; it then descends with such astounding impetuosity that it destroys the banks, and in its furious course uproots and bears along trees, fragments of rocks, etc., which vainly oppose its passage. In a few days the entire valley is overflowed, and it presents to view immense lakes and morasses, separated by borders of trees. Thus does the kind Providence of God assist his poor creatures who inhabit these regions, by the liberality with which he ministers to their wants. These lakes and morasses, formed in the spring, are filled with fish; they remain there inclosed as in natural reservoirs, for the use of the inhabitants. The fish swarm in such abundance that the Indians have no other labor than to take them from the water and prepare them for the boiler. Such an existence is, however, precarious; the savages, who are not of a provident nature, are obliged to go afterward in quest of roots, grain, berries and fruits; such as the thorny bush which bears a sweet, pleasant blackberry; the rose-buds, mountain cherry, cormier or service berry, various sorts of gooseberries and currants of excellent flavor; raspberries, the hawthorn berry, the wappato, a very nourishing bulbous root; the bitter root, whose appellation sufficiently denotes its peculiar quality, is, however, very healthy; it grows in light, dry, sandy soil, as also the caious or biscuit root. The former is of a thin and cylindrical form; the latter, though farinaceous and insipid, is a substitute for bread; it resembles a small white radish; the watery potato, oval and greenish, is prepared like our ordinary potato, but greatly inferior to it; the small onion; the sweet onion, which bears a lovely flower resembling the tulip. Strawberries are common and delicious.

To this catalogue I could add a number of detestable fruits and roots which serve as nutriment for the Indians, but at which a civilized stomach would revolt and nauseate. I cannot pass over in silence the camas root, and the peculiar manner in which it is prepared. It is abundant, and, I may say, is the queen root of this clime. It is a small, white, vapid onion, when removed from the earth, but becomes black and sweet when prepared for food. The women arm themselves with long crooked sticks to go in search of the camas. After having procured a certain quantity of these roots, by dint of long and painful labor, they make an excavation in the earth from twelve to fifteen inches deep, and of proportional diameter, to contain the roots. They cover the bottom with closely-cemented pavement, which they make red hot by means of a fire. After having carefully withdrawn all the coals, they cover the stones with grass or wet hay; then place a layer of camas, another of wet hay, a third of bark overlaid with mold, whereon is kept a glowing fire for fifty, sixty, and sometimes seventy hours. The camas thus acquires a consistency equal to that of the jujube. It is sometimes made into loaves of various dimensions. It is excellent, especially when boiled with meat; if kept dry, it can be preserved a long time.

As soon as their provisions are exhausted the Indians scour the plains, forests, and mountains in quest of game. If they are unsuccessful in the chase, their hunger becomes so extreme that they are reduced to subsist on moss, which is more abundant than the camas. It is a parasite of the pine, a tree common in these latitudes, and hangs from its boughs in great quantities; it appears more suitable for mattresses than for the sustenance of human life. When they have procured a great quantity, they pick out all heterogeneous substance, and prepare it as they do the camas; it becomes compact, and is, in my opinion, a most miserable food, which in a brief space reduces those who live on it to a pitiable state of emaciation.

Such are the Arcs-à-plats. They know neither industry, art, nor science; the words *mine* and *thine* are scarcely known among them. They enjoy in common the means of existence spontaneously granted them by nature; and as they are strangely improvident, they often pass from the greatest abundance to extreme scarcity. They feast well one day, and the following is passed in total abstinence. The two extremes are equally pernicious. Their cadaverous figure sufficiently demonstrates what I here advance.

I arrived among the Arcs-à-plats in time to witness the grand fish festival, which is yearly celebrated; the men only have the privilege of assisting thereat. Around a fire fifty feet long, partially overlaid with stones of the size of a turkey's egg, eighty men range themselves; each man is provided with an osier vessel, cemented with gum and filled with water and fish. The hall where this extraordinary feast is celebrated is constructed of rush mats, and has three apertures, one at either extremity for the entrance of guests; the middle one serves for transporting the fish. All preparations being completed, and each man at his post, the chief, after a short harangue of encouragement to his people, finishes by a prayer of supplication to the Great Spirit, of whom he demands an abundant draught. He gives the signal to commence, and each one, armed with two sticks flattened at the extremity, makes use of them instead of tongs, to draw the stones from the embers, and put them in his kettle. This process is twice renewed, and in the space of five minutes the fish are cooked. Finally, they squat around the fire in the most profound silence to enjoy the repast, each trembling lest a bone be disjointed or broken — an indispensable condition (a *sine quâ non*) of a plentiful fishery. A single bone broken would be regarded as ominous, and the unlucky culprit banished the society of his comrades, lest his presence should entail on them some dread evil.

A species of sturgeon which measures from six to ten and sometimes twelve feet in length, is taken by the dart in the great lake and river of the Arcs-à-plats.

Since my arrival among the Indians, the feast of the glorious Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary has ever been to me a day of great consolation. I had time to prepare for the celebration of this solemn festival. Thanks be to the instructions and counsels of a brave Canadian, Mr. Berland, who for a long time has resided among them in the quality of trader, I found the little tribe of Arcs-à-plats docile, and in the best disposition to embrace the faith. They had already been instructed in the principal mysteries of religion. They sang canticles in the French and Indian tongues. They number about ninety families. I celebrated the first mass ever offered in their land; after which ten adults already advanced in age and ninety children received baptism. The former were very attentive to all my instructions. In the afternoon, the erection of the cross was as solemn as circumstances would admit. There was a grand salute of ninety guns, and at the foot of the lowly standard of the God-Savior, the entire tribe made a tender of their hearts to him, with the promise of inviolable attachment to all the duties of true children of prayer, availing themselves of this occasion to renounce the remains of their ancient juggling and superstition. The cross was elevated on the border of a lake, and the station received the beautiful name of the Assumption. Under the auspices of Mary, that good Mother, in whose honor they have for many years sung canticles, we hope that religion will take deep root and flourish amidst this tribe, where union, innocence and simplicity reign in full vigor. They ardently desire to be taught agriculture, the advantages of which I have explained, and promised to procure the necessary seed and implements of husbandry.

Monseigneur:[6]

The Flatbows and Kootenais now form one tribe, divided into two branches. They are known throughout the country by the appellation of the Skalzi. Advancing toward the territory of the Kootenais we were enchanted by the beautiful and diversified scenery. We sometimes traversed undulatory woods of pine and cedar, from which the light of day is partially excluded. We next entered sombre forests, where, axe in hand, we were forced to cut our way and wind about to avoid hosts of trees that had been leveled by the autumnal blasts and storms. Some of these forests are so dense that at the distance of twelve feet,[7] I could not distinguish my guide. The most certain way of extricating one's self from these labyrinths is to trust to the horse's sagacity, which, if left unguided, will follow the track of other animals. This expedient has saved me a hundred times.

I cannot refrain from communicating to your lordship the gloomy and harrowing thoughts which imagination conjures up in these dismal regions. The most fearful apprehensions dismay the bravest heart and cause an involuntary

[6] Letter dated Upper Ford of the Flatbow [Kootenai] river, September 2, 1845.

[7] Fr. une douzaine de verges.

shudder, as some dire apparition of a bear or panther stalks in fancy before the mind, whilst groping our way amidst these dark and frightful haunts, from which there is no egress. We caught a transitory glimpse of many charming spots covered with vegetation as we pursued our winding path near the river, wherever it deviated from its natural course. At a place called the Portage, the river crosses a defile of mountains, or rather of precipitous and frightful rocks; and the traveler is compelled, for the distance of eight miles, to risk his life at every step and brave obstacles that appear at first sight insuperable.

Whatever can be imagined appalling seems here combined to terrify the heart — livid gashes of ravines and precipices, giant peaks and ridges of varied hue, inaccessible pinnacles, fearful and unfathomable chasms filled with the sound of ever-precipitating waters, long, sloping and narrow banks, which must be alternately ascended, and many times have I been obliged to take the attitude of a quadruped and walk upon my hands; often during this perilous passage did I return fervent thanks to the Almighty for his protection from impending danger. Amid these stern, heaven-built walls of rocks the water has forced its way in varied forms, and we find cataracts and whirlpools engulfing crags and trees beneath their angry sway. Whilst the eye rests with pleasure on the rich and russet hues of distant slopes, upland turf and rock-hung flower — the ear is stunned by the confused sounds of murmuring rills, rushing streams, impetuous falls and roaring torrents.

An extensive plain at the base of the Portage mountain presents every advantage for the foundation of a city. The mountains surrounding this agreeable site are majestic and picturesque. They forcibly recalled to my memory the noble Mapocho Mountains that encompass the beautiful capital of Chile (Santiago). Innumerable little rills, oozing from the mountain's stony bosom, diffuse a transparent haze over the valleys and lower slopes. The fine river Des Chutes

[Elk river?] comes roaring down and crosses the plain before it joins its waters to the McGilvray, [Kootenai] which tranquilly pursues its course. The quarries and forests appear inexhaustible; and having remarked large pieces of coal along the river, I am convinced that this fossil could be abundantly procured. What would this now solitary and desolate land become, under the fostering hand of civilization? Indeed, the entire tract of the Skalzi seems awaiting the benign influence of a civilized people. Great quantities of lead are found on the surface of the earth; and from the appearance of its superior quality, we are led to believe there may be some mixture of silver.

Poor, unfortunate Indians! they trample on treasures, unconscious of their worth, and content themselves with the fishery and chase. When these resources fail, they subsist upon roots and herbs; whilst they eye, with tranquil surprise, the white man examining the shining pebbles of their territory. Ah! they would tremble, indeed, could they learn the history of those numerous and ill-fated tribes that have been swept from their land, to make place for Christians who have made the poor Indians the victims of their rapacity.

After a fews days' journey we arrived at the Prairie du Tabac, the usual abode of the Kootenais. Their camp is situated in an immense and delightful valley, bounded by two eminences, which, from their gentle and regular declivity, covered with smooth pebbles, appear to have originally bounded an extensive lake.

On my arrival, I found about thirty lodges of Kootenais; hunger had forced many families to cross the great mountain. They came in quest of the buffalo, elk, antelope and stag. I was received with every demonstration of joy and filial affection by those who remained in the lodges. They hailed me with a long and boisterous discharge of musketry. Several showed me their journal, consisting of a square stick on which they had notched the number of days and weeks elapsed since I abode with them in the neighborhood of the great Flathead lake. They had computed forty-one months and some days.

Mr. Berland had exerted his zeal to maintain the Kootenais and their brethren in the good dispositions in which I had the consolation of finding them. Since my last visit they have followed, to the very letter, all they remembered of my recommendations. I was obliged to decide some controversial points, which they had misinterpreted or misapprehended. They habitually assembled for morning and evening prayer, continued the practice of singing canticles in French and Flathead, and faithfully observed the Sabbath precept.

On the feast of the Holy Heart of Mary I sang high mass, thus taking spiritual possession of this land, which was now for the first time trodden by a minister of the Most High. I administered the sacrament of baptism to 105 persons, among whom were twenty adults. An imposing ceremony terminated the exercises of the day. Amidst a general salute from the camp, a large cross was elevated. The chiefs, at the head of their tribe, advanced and prostrated themselves before that sacred ensign, which speaks so eloquently of the love of a Man-God, who came to redeem a fallen race. At the foot of that sacred emblem, they loudly offered their hearts to him who has declared himself our master and the divine pastor of souls. This station bears the name of the Holy Heart of Mary. One of our Fathers will soon visit the two branches of this tribe.

Though these poor people were much in want of food, they pressed me to remain some days amongst them, whilst they listened with avidity to my instructions relative to their future conduct. After my departure they divided into small bands to go in search of provisions among the defiles of the mountains.

On the 30th of August I bade adieu to the Kootenais. Two young men of their tribe offered to conduct me to the

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country of the Blackfeet, and a third Indian, an expert hunter and good interpreter, completed the number of my little escort. I then journeyed on toward the sources of the Columbia. The country we traversed was highly picturesque and agreeably diversified by beautiful prairies, from which poured forth spicy odors of flower and shrub and fresh spirit-elating breezes, smiling valleys and lakes, surrounded by hoary and solemn pines, gracefully waving their flexible branches. We also crossed magnificent dark Alpine forests, where the sound of the axe has never resounded; they are watered by streams which impetuously rush over savage crags and precipices from the range of mountains on the right. This stupendous chain appears like some impregnable barrier of colossal firmness. From Tobacco Prairie to the sources of the Columbia, we found a fine practicable trail.

All hail! Majestic Rock — the home,
Where many a wand'rer yet shall come,
Where God himself from his own heart,
Shall health and peace and joy impart.[8]

Monseigneur:[9]

The 4th of September, toward noon, I found myself at the source of the Columbia. I contemplated with admiration those rugged and gigantic mountains where the great river escapes — majestic, but impetuous even at its source; and in its vagrant course it is undoubtedly the most dangerous river on the western side of the American hemisphere. Two small lakes from four to five miles in length, formed by a number of springs and streams, are the reservoirs of its first waters.

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[8] From Father De Smet's *Ode to the Rocky Mountains*, see p. 1354.

[9] Letter dated Source of the Columbia, September 9, 1845.

I pitched my tent on the banks of the first fork that brings in its feeble tribute, and which we behold rushing with impetuosity over the inaccessible rocks that present themselves on the right. What sublime rocks! How varied in shape and figure! The fantastic in every form, the attractive, the ludicrous and the sublime, present themselves simultaneously to the view; and by borrowing ever so little the aid of the imagination, we behold rising before our astonished eyes castles of by-gone chivalry, with their many-embattled towers — fortresses, surrounded by their walls and bulwarks — palaces with their domes — and, in fine, cathedrals with their lofty spires.

On arriving at the two lakes, I saw them covered with swarms of aquatic birds — coots, ducks, water-fowl, cormorants, bustards, cranes and swans; whilst beneath the tranquil water lay shoals of salmon in a state of exhaustion. At the entrance of the second lake, in a rather shallow and narrow place, I saw them pass in great numbers, cut and mutilated, after their long watery pilgrimage among the rapids, cataracts, valleys and falls; they continue this uninterrupted procession during weeks and months. Perhaps I shall scarcely be believed when I affirm that the salmon fish are quarrelsome. I witnessed with surprise the sharp and vengeful bites they mutually inflicted. These two lakes form an immense tomb, for they there die in such numbers as frequently to infect the whole surrounding atmosphere.

In the absence of man, the grey, [grizzly] black and brown bear, the wolf, the eagle and the vulture assemble in crowds at this season of the year. They fish their prey on the banks of the river and at the entrance of the lakes — claws, teeth and bills serving them instead of hooks and darts. From thence, when the snow begins to fall, the bears, plump and fat, resume the road back to their dens in the thick of the forests and hollows of rocks, there to pass the four sad wintry months in complete indolence, with no other pastime or occupation than that of sucking their four paws.

If we may credit the Indians, each paw occupies the bear for one moon, (a month) and the task accomplished, he turns on the other side and begins to suck the second, and so on with the rest.

I will here mention, *en passant,* that all the hunters and Indians remark that it is a very uncommon incident for a female bear to be killed when with young, and notwithstanding they are killed in all seasons of the year. Where they go — what becomes of them during the period they carry their young — is a problem yet to be solved by our mountain hunters.

When emigration, accompanied by industry, the arts and sciences, shall have penetrated into the numberless valleys of the Rocky Mountains, the source of the Columbia will prove a very important point. The climate is delightful; the extremes of heat and cold are seldom known. The snow disappears as fast as it falls; the laborious hand that would till these valleys would be repaid a hundredfold. Innumerable herds could graze throughout the year in these meadows, where the sources and streams nurture a perpetual freshness and abundance. The hillocks and declivities of the mountains are generally studded with inexhaustible forests, in which the larch tree, pine of different species, cedar and cypress abound.

In the plain between the two lakes are beautiful springs, whose waters have reunited and formed a massive rock of soft sandy stone, which has the appearance of an immense congealed or petrified cascade. Their waters are soft and pellucid; and of the same temperature as the milk just drawn from the cow. The description given by Chandler of the famous fountain of Pambuk Kalessi, or the ancient Hierapolis of Asia Minor, in the valley of Meander, and of which Malte Brun makes mention, might be literally applied to the warm springs at the source of the Columbia. The prospect unfolded to our view was so wonderful, that an attempt to give even a faint idea of it would savor of romance, without going beyond the limits of fact. We contemplated with an admiring gaze this vast slope, which from a distance had the appearance of chalk, and when nearer extends like an immense concreted cascade, its undulating surface resembling a body of water suddenly checked or indurated in its rapid course.

The first lake of the Columbia is two miles and a half distant from the river des Arcs-à-plats, and receives a portion of its waters during the great spring freshet. They are separated by a bottom land. The advantages nature seems to have bestowed on the source of the Columbia will render its geographical position very important at some future day. The magic hand of civilized man would transform it into a terrestrial paradise.

The Canadian! Into what part of the desert has he not penetrated? The monarch who rules at the source of the Columbia is an honest emigrant from St. Martin, in the district of Montreal, who has resided for twenty-six years in this desert. The skins of the rein and moose deer[10] are the materials of which his portable palace is composed; and to use his own expressions, he *embarks on horseback* with his wife and seven children, and *lands* wherever he pleases. Here no one disputes his right, and Polk and Peel, who are now contending for the possession of his dominions, are as unknown to our carbineer as the two greatest powers of the moon. His sceptre is a beaver trap — his law a carbine — the one on his back, the other on his arm, he reviews his numerous furry subjects, the beaver, otter, muskrat, marten, fox, bear, wolf, the sheep and the white goat of the mountains, the black-tailed roe-buck, as well as its red-tailed relative, the stag, the rein and moose deer; some of which respect his sceptre — others submit to his law. He exacts and receives from them the tribute of flesh and skins. Encircled by so much grandeur, undisturbed proprietor of all the skyward palaces, the strongholds, the very last refuge which nature has reared to preserve alive liberty in the earth — solitary lord of these majestic mountains, that elevate their icy summits even to the clouds — Morigeau (our Canadian) does not forget his duty as a Christian. Each day, morning and evening, he may be seen devoutly reciting his prayers midst his little family.

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[10] Fr. caribou et orignal.

Many years had Morigeau ardently desired to see a priest; and when he learned that I was about to visit the source of the Columbia, he repaired thither in all haste to procure for his wife and children the signal grace of baptism. The feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, this favor was conferred on them, and also on the children of three Indian families who accompany him in his migrations. This was a solemn day for the desert! The august sacrifice of mass was offered; Morigeau devoutly approached the holy table — at the foot of the humble altar he received the nuptial benediction; and the mother, surrounded by her children and six[11] little Indians, was regenerated in the holy waters of baptism. In memory of so many benefits a large cross was erected in the plain, which from that time is called the Plain of the Nativity.

I cannot leave my good Canadian without making an honorable mention of his royal *cuisine à la sauvage*. The first dish he presented me contained two paws of a bear. In Africa, this ragout might have given some alarm; in effect, it bears a striking resemblance to the feet of a certain race. A roast porcupine next made its appearance, accompanied by a moose's muzzle, which had been boiling all night. The latter I found delicious. Finally the great kettle, containing a sort of hotch-potch or salmagundi, was placed in the midst of the guests, and each one helped himself according to his taste; there was the choice back-fat of the buffalo-cow, venison, cutlets, beavers' tails, quail, rabbits, dumplings and a substantial broth.

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[11] Fr. ten.

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"——— Here
Poplars and birch trees ever quivering played,
And nodding cedars formed a vagrant shade;
On whose high branches, waving with the storm,
The birds of broadest wings their mansion form;
The jay, the magpie, the loquacious crow,
And soar aloft and skim the deeps below.
Here limpid fountains from the clefts distil,
And every fountain forms a noisy rill,
In mazy windings wand'ring down the hill."—*Pope.*

Monseigneur:[12]

We bade adieu to the Morigeau family on the 9th, and to their companions of the chase, the Shooswaps. We quitted the upper valley of the Columbia by a small footpath, which soon conducted us to a narrow mountain defile,[13] where the light of day almost vanished from view amidst the huge, bold barriers of colossal rocks. The grand, the sublime, the beautiful, here form the most singular and fantastic combinations. Though gray is the prevailing color, we find an immense rock of porphyry, or white-veined granite. Here and there, from the fissures of the rock, or wherever there is a handful of dust, the heavy and immortal pine enroots itself, adding its gloomy verdure to the variegated hues of the torpid rocks. These circuitous paths often present the most ravishing and picturesque vistas; surrounded by colossal walls, the greatest diversity and most beautiful scenery in nature is spread out before the eye, where the spruce and cedar rise majestically in these venerable woods, the graceful poplar waves on high its emerald plumes and fights its battles with the howling storm, whilst over the precipitous and jagged rocks the scarcely-waving pine fills the brown shade with religious awe. The birch springs from an earth carpeted with moss, and shines like magnificent silver columns, supporting diadems of golden autumnal leaves, amidst the redolent purple-berried juniper and azure turpentines of these humid dells and forests.

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[12] Letter dated Foot of the Cross of Peace, September 15, 1845.

[13] "In 1845, while trying to reach the summit of the Rocky Mountains and cross it to reach the Blackfoot country, I left the upper lakes of the Columbia by a narrow valley along the bank of a great torrent, between two lofty chains of mountains. This valley and mountain stream bear the name of 'the place where the old man lied.' I learned from my guides that the Indians speak of the place with horror to their children, as of an accursed land, and inspire them with an aversion for lying. They assured me that when the savages traverse this 'Liar's Valley,' they observe profound silence."—Letter written in July, 1855.

After a day's journey through these primeval scenes, we reached the banks of the river Arcs-à-plats, where innumerable torrents rush headlong with a thousand mazes from the mountain's brow, and in their union form this noble river. From afar is heard the deafening and continuous sound of its own dashings, as it traverses a rocky bed with extraordinary rapidity. We crossed the river in order to attempt the passage of another defile, still more wonderful, where the waters of the Vermillion have forced an opening. Here, everything strikes the eye; all is wild sublimity in this profound but turbulent solitude. Projecting mountains rise like holy towers where man might commune with the sky — terrible precipices hang in fragments overhead — the astounding noise of the deep-tongued waves, in their unconfined flow, resembles that of the angry tempest, sweeping wild and free, like the spirit of liberty. Now the breaking waves play low upon the rock-ribbed beach, and madly plunge into an abyss — anon it returns foaming to its sedgy bed, apparently sporting with the sedges for diversion — falling from slope to slope, from cascade to cascade, passing in its course a long train of rapids — now concealing itself under the tufted foliage of cedar and pine — again pouring its brilliant and crystalline waters into a capacious basin, as if to take breath before quitting the ravine, and finally precipitating its wandering course with renovated vigor.

From this almost impenetrable forest issues a harmonious sound. 'Tis the whistling or lowing of the noble stag, calling its companion. The moose, the most vigilant of animals, gives the signal of alarm. He has heard the cracking branch — he has inhaled the hunter's deadly breath[?]; a confused noise is heard from the mountain; the sportsman raises his eager eye to its summit, and scans a flock of reindeer perched upon the snow; they are started at the approach of man; in an instant they are lost among the inaccessible pinnacles, the

> "Palaces where Nature thrones
> Sublimity in icy halls."

We often catch a glimpse of the graceful forms and nimble feats of the roe-bucks, as they caper and gallop, or tarry an instant to look around with their lancet ears distended to catch every sound; these wild forest stragglers resume their course, and finally penetrate into the sombre forest. Flocks of wild goats gambol carelessly and tranquilly beside herds of mountain sheep above overhanging precipices and peaked rocks, chequered by patches of snow, far beyond the reach of human footsteps.

A monstrous animal, the grey [grizzly] bear, which replaces on our mountains the African lion, is not content with growling and menacing the intrepid venturer, who dares infringe on his cavernous dominions, but grinds his teeth, expressive of his rage. Suddenly, a well-aimed gunshot forces him to make a lowly reverence; the formidable beast rolls in the dust, biting the sand saturated with his blood, and expires.

The ordinary music of the desert is the shrill cry of the panther, and the howling of the wolf. The diminutive mountain hare, six inches high,[14] and whose biography has not yet found a place in natural history, amuses itself amidst the stony rubbish, and exhibits wonderful activity; whilst his neighbor, the lubberly porcupine, clambers up, seats himself upon a branching cypress and gnaws the bark. He views the eager huntsman with a careless and indifferent air, unconscious that his tender flesh is regarded as a most delicious morsel. The industrious beaver, like a wary sentinel, warns his family of man's approach by striking the water with his tail. The muskrat, or musquash, plunges immediately into the water. The otter quits his sports and slides upon his belly among the reeds — the timid squirrel leaps from bough to bough, until it reaches the topmost shade of the cypress; the marten jumps from tree to tree, and buries itself in the foliage — the whistler[15] and weasel repair to their respective domiciles — a precipitous flight alone saves the fox his rich silvery *pelisse* — the badger, or ground-hog, too remote from his dwelling, digs the sandy soil and buries himself alive, to avoid pursuit — his magnificent skin is destined to adorn the loins of an Indian — it requires the joint efforts of two men to force[16] him from his hiding place, and to kill him.

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[14] Long? Fr. qui n'a pas plus de 6 pouces.

The evening previous to our egression from the blind mazes of this tangled wood, our eyes were recreated by a ravishing scene. When it presents itself after a disastrous combat, the spectacle consoles the afflicted heart of the savage warrior. From the mountain's top we contemplated the "dance of the manitous or spirits, and the glorious entrance of departed champions into the country of souls." Vast columns of light varying in splendor appeared to divert and balance themselves in the heavens — some of perpendicular form; others resembling undulatory waves; now concealing, now exhibiting themselves under diversified aspects until the entire hemisphere seemed brilliantly illuminated. All these masses united at the zenith, and then separated under a variety of forms.

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[15] Siffleur; elsewhere defined as "a species of mountain rat."

[16] Fr. arracher.

Mysterious, solemn, cold and clear,
  Their steps majestic rise,
Like barriers round this earthly sphere,
  Like gates of Paradise.
Well may imagination faint
  Before your sacred blaze,
And baffled science fail to paint
  The source of heaven-lit rays.[17]

The aurora borealis is a phenomenon which I always contemplate with mingled admiration and pleasure. All that is seen, all that is heard in this unfathomable solitude, is both agreeable and instructive. It strikes, captivates and elevates the mind toward the Author of nature. *Mirabilia opera Domini!*

After much fatigue, labor and admiration, on the 15th we traversed the high lands separating the waters of Oregon from those of the south branch of the Saskatchewan, or the ancient Bourbon river, so called before the Canadian conquest by the British. It is the largest tributary of the [lake] Winnipeg, which flows into Hudson Bay by the river Nelson, 58° north latitude.

The Christian's standard, the cross, has been reared at the source of these two rivers: may it be a sign of salvation and peace to all the scattered and itinerant tribes east and west of these gigantic and lurid mountains.

On the cypress which serves for constructing the cross, the eagle, emblem of the Indian warrior, perches himself The huntsman aims — the noble bird lies prostrate, and even in his fall, seems to retain his kingly pride. It so forcibly recalls to memory the beautiful lines of the illustrious Campbell, that I quote them in full:

Fallen as he is, the king of birds still seems
Like royalty in ruins. Though his eyes
Are shut, that looked undazzled on the sun,
He was the sultan of the sky, and earth

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[17] Park Benjamin.

Paid tribute to his eyrie. It was perched
Higher than human conqueror ever built
His bannered fort. * * *
* * * He clove the adverse storm
And cuffed it with his wings. He stopped his flight
As easily as the Arab reins his steed,
And stood at pleasure 'neath heaven's zenith, like
A lamp suspended from its azure dome;
Whilst underneath him the world's mountains lay
Like mole-hills, and her streams like lucid threads.

We breakfasted on the bank of a limpid lake at the base of the "Cross of Peace," from whence I have the honor of dating my letter, and of giving you the renewed assurance of my profound respect and veneration; recommending to your fervent prayers, in a special manner, this vast desert, which contains so many precious souls still buried in the shades of death.

"Here bloomy meads with vivid greens are crown'd,
And glowing violets throw sweet odors round."

Monseigneur.[18]

By a steep declivity we entered a rich valley, agreeably diversified by enameled meads, magnificient forests, and lakes — in which the salmon-trout so abound, that in a few minutes we procured sufficient for an excellent repast. The valley is bounded on either side by a succession of picturesque rocks, whose lofty summits, rising in the form of pyramids, lose themselves in the clouds. The far-famed Egyptian monuments of Cheops and Cephren dwindle into nought before this gigantic architectural cliff of nature. The natural pyramids of the Rocky Mountains seem to deride the artificial skill of man; they serve as a resting place for the clouds that come hither to seek repose, and to encircle their giant brows. The Lord's omnipotent hand has laid the foundations — he has permitted the elements to form them, and in every age they proclaim his power and glory!

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[18] Letter dated Camp of the Assiniboins, September 26, 1845.

We emerged from this delightful valley on the 18th of September, after a three days' excursion, and recommenced our mountainous peregrination, which presented nothing but obstacles and contusions, both to men and horses. For the space of six hours we were compelled to trace our route across fragments of broken rocks, through an extensive and parched forest, and where millions of half-consumed trees lay extended in every direction. Not a trace of vegetation remained, and never had I contemplated so dismal and destructive a conflagration!

We reached the Bow or Askow river in the evening, and pitched our solitary tent upon the shore. Here we discovered some vestiges of a savage party. Five days previous, nine lodges of Indians had encamped upon the very spot. We made a careful search, and my guides imagined they were the formidable Blackfeet! We, the same day, saw two smokes at the extremity of the plain over which these barbarians had traveled. My companions seemed to hesitate, as we drew near the vicinity of these fearful Blackfeet. They recounted to me their inauspicious dreams, and wished to deter me from proceeding. One said: "I saw myself devoured by a wild bear;" another, "I saw ravens and vultures, (ill-omened birds) hovering over the head of our Father;" a third saw a bloody spectacle. I gave them, in my turn, the history of one of my sentries, the archetype of vigilance, courage and simplicity.

"Midst the dark horrors of the sable night
(No idle dream I tell nor fancy's strain)
Thrice rose the red man's shade upon my sight,
Thrice vanished into dusky air again.
With courage high my panting bosom swells,
Onward I rushed upon the threatening foe,
When, hark! Horrific rise thespectre's yells
He points the steel and aims the fatal blow;

Guard, sentinel! to arms! to arms! to arms!
Indians! Indians! my voice swelled loud and deep:
The camp is roused at dread of my alarms,
They wake and find—*that I am sound asleep!*[19]

They were greatly amused at the recital of his imaginary fancies, and seemed to understand how little import I attached to such visions. "Happen what may," said they, "we shall never quit our Father until we see him in a place of safety." This was precisely what I desired. I could not, however, deceive myself. I had finally entered a land, the theatre of so many sanguinary scenes. I was now on the very confines of these barbarous people, from which, possibly, I should never return! It not unfrequently happens that in their unbridled fury when they hear some relative has been killed, the Blackfeet dispatch the first stranger they meet, scalp him — and then abandon to the wolves and dogs the palpitating limbs of the unfortunate victim of their vengeance, hatred and superstition. I declare to you, I was beset by a thousand disquietudes concerning the fate that awaited me. Poor nature! this timid and fragile *meus homo* is sometimes terrified. He would wish to look back and listen to dreams. My longing desires repeated incessantly — *Advance!* I placed my whole confidence in God — the prayers of so many fervent souls encouraged and reanimated me; I resolved not to be deterred by an uncertain danger. The Lord can, when he pleases, mollify these pitiless and ferocious hearts. The salvation of souls is at stake, and the preservation of the Mission of St. Mary's depends on my proceeding; for there the incursions of the Blackfeet are very frequent. What consideration could deter me from a project which my heart had cherished, since my first visit among the mountains?

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[19] This episode and the above lines composed in honor of it were evidently favorites with Father De Smet. He was fond of working them into his letters, and he or some of his polyglot friends, put the rhymes into various languages. We give two versions:

Tempus erat, quo densa tenebrarum agmina terram
Invadunt, et nox infudit praecordia somnos.
Ecce autem medium tenebris, exhorreo dictu!
Terribilis mihi silvicolarum occurrit imago!
Ter rapidis volitans alis, repetitque fugitque
Umbra. Tumente animo sub pectore fortis in hostem
Irruo, vel potius trepidans visu irruere opto;
Cum subito tremulis pennis hasta umbra minante
Advolat ut condat crudele in pectore ferrum.
Loca tenens animo constanti, arma, arma! clamabam!
Magna lustra sonant voce! Indicus, Indicus ecce!
Miscentur subito pavitantia murmure castra,
Excussi somno, currunt quo voce vocati.
Obstupuere! gravis mea somnus membra tenebat!

* * * * * * * * *

De grouwzaem middernacht was nauwelyk geslagen,
  Toen, en 'k bied u de waerheid aen,
Shaks en tot drymael toe myn eigen oogen zaegen
  De schim van eenen Indiaen.
Vol moed, ik loop er op, gewapend met myn degen;
  Maer ziet, ver van te zyn vervaerd,
Het schroomelyke spook koomt my stoutmoedig tegen,
  En heft op my zyn naekte zwaerd.
De vrees springt my naer 't hert; ik roop als half verslonden,
  Moord, moord! de duivel, d'Indiaen!
Ontwekt 't volk koomt ter hulp, en heeft m'in slaep gevonden:—
  Zoo ben ik dit gevaer ontgaen.

The 19th and 20th, we followed the tracks of our unknown predecessors, and they appeared more and more recent. I dispatched my two guides to reconnoitre, and ascertain whom we were so closely pursuing. One of them returned the same evening, with the news that he had found a small camp of Assiniboins of the Forest; that they had been well received; that a disease reigned in the camp, of which two had lately died, and that they expressed great desire to see the Black-robe. The following morning we joined them, and journeyed several days in company.

The Assiniboins of the Forest do not amount to more than fifty lodges or families, divided into several bands. They are seldom seen in the plains; the forest is their element, and they are renowned huntsmen and warriors. They travel over the mountains and through the woods, over the different forks and branches of the sources of the Saskatchewan and Athabasca. Agriculture is unknown to this tribe; they subsist exclusively on small animals, such as bighorns, goats, bucks; but especially on the porcupine, which swarms in this region. When pressed by hunger, they have recourse to roots, seeds and the inner bark of the cypress tree. They own few horses, and perform all their journeys on foot.

Their hunters set out early in the morning, kill all the game they meet, and suspend it to the trees as they pass along — their poor wives, or rather their slaves, often bearing two children on their backs and dragging several more after them, tardily follow their husbands and collect what game the latter have killed. They had a long file of famished dogs, loaded with their little provisions, etc. Every family has a band of six to twelve of these animals, and each dog carries from thirty to fifty pounds weight. They are the most wretched animals in existence; from their tender-hearted masters and mistresses they receive more bastinados than morsels, consequently they are the most adroit and incorrigible rogues to be found in the forest. Every evening we find it necessary to hang all our property upon the trees, beyond the reach of these voracious dogs. We are even compelled to barricade ourselves within our tents at night, and surround them with boughs of trees; for whatever is of leather, or whatever has pertained to a living being, these crafty rogues bear away and devour. You will say I have little charity for these poor brutes — but be not astonished. One fine evening having neglected the ordinary precaution of blocking up the entrance of my tent, I next morning found myself without shoes — with a collarless cassock — and minus one leg to my *culottes de peau!* One of the chiefs of this little camp recounted to me, that last winter one of his nation, having been reduced to extreme famine, (and such cases are not rare) had eaten successively his wife and four children. The monster then fled into the desert, and he has never been heard of since.

The Oregon missionary, Reverend Mr. Bolduc, related in his journal that at Akena, one of the Gambier Isles,[20] he saw an old dame, who, having had eight husbands, had eaten three of them, during a time of famine. I add this last fact to give you a reverse to the above horrible picture.

The Assiniboins have the reputation of being irascible, jealous and fond of babbling; in consequence of these bad qualities, battles and murders are not unfrequent among them, and of course continual divisions. Every evening I gave them instruction by means of an interpreter. They appeared docile, though somewhat timorous: for they had frequently been visited by persons who defamed both priests and religion. I rendered all the little services in my power to their invalids, baptized six children and an old man[21] who expired two days after; he was interred with all the funeral ceremonies and prayers of the Church.

Cleanliness is a virtue which has no place in the Indian catalogue of domestic or personal duties. The Assiniboins are filthy beyond conception; they surpass all their neighbors in this unenvied qualification. They are devoured by vermin, which they, in turn, consume. A savage, whom I playfully reprehended for his cruelty to these little invertebral insects, saying, "Are you not ashamed to bite those poor little beasts?" Answered me: "They bit me first; I have a right to be revenged." Through complacency, I one day overcame natural disgust and assisted at their porcupine feast. I beheld the Indians carve the meat on their leathern shirts, highly polished with grease — filthy, and swarming with vermin; they had disrobed themselves, for the purpose of providing a tablecloth! They dried their hands in their hair — this is their only towel — and as the porcupine has naturally a strong and offensive odor, one can hardly endure the fragrance of those who feast upon its flesh and besmear themselves with its oil.

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[20] A Polynesian group.

[21] *Missionary work among the Assiniboins.*—Father Palladino says, somewhat vaguely, of the Assiniboins and Grosventres, "Father De Smet, and after him Father Point, were the first who did missionary work among these Indians." A detachment of Assiniboins accompanied Father De Smet for some distance in the summer of 1851, on the way to the Grand Council, and he took a special interest in one of their chiefs called Fool Bear. No baptisms are mentioned, however. In 1866 Father De Smet baptized a number of Assiniboin children at Fort Union; see pp. 857 and 883. Father Giorda baptized certain Grosventre children in 1862, and Father Grassi some Assiniboins in 1879. The Mission of St. Paul's was established, with Government approval, among them in 1885.

A good old woman, whose face was anointed with blood of the porcupine, (the Indians' mourning weeds) presented me a wooden platter filled with soup; the horn spoon destined for my use was dirty and covered with grease; she had the complaisance to apply it to the broad side of her tongue, before putting it into my unsavory broth.

If a bit of dried meat, or any other provision is in need of being cleansed, the dainty cook fills her mouth with water and spurts it with her whole force upon the fated object. A certain dish, which is considered a prime delicacy among the Indians, is prepared in a most singular manner, and they are entitled to a patent for the happy faculty of invention. The whole process belongs exclusively to the female department. They commence by rubbing their hands with grease, and collecting in them the blood of the animal, which they boil with water; finally, they fill the kettle with fat and hashed meat. But — hashed with the teeth! Often half a dozen old women are occupied in this mincing operation for hours; mouthful after mouthful is masticated, and thus passes from the mouth into the cauldron, to compose the choice ragout of the Rocky Mountains. Add to this, by way of an exquisite dessert, an immense dish of crusts, composed of pulverized ants, grasshoppers and locusts, that had been dried in the sun, and you may then be able to form some idea of Assiniboin luxury.

The American porcupine, the *Hystrix dorsata*, is called by modern zoologists the prickly beaver. In fact there is great similarity between the two species in size and form, and both inhabit the same region. The porcupine, like the beaver, has a double peltry or fur; the first is long and soft; the second is still softer, and greatly resembles down or felt. They both have two long sharp, strong tusks at the extremity of the jaw-bone. The Flatheads affirm that the porcupine and beaver are brothers, and relate that anciently they abode together; but that, having frequently been discovered by their enemies, through the indolence, idleness and extreme aversion of the porcupines for the water, the beavers met in council and unanimously agreed upon a separation. The latter availed themselves of a fine day and invited their spiny brethren to accompany them in a long ramble, among the cypress and juniper of the forest. The indolent and heedless porcupines, having copiously regaled themselves with the savory buds of the one and the tender rind of the other, extended their weary limbs upon the verdant moss and were soon lost in profound sleep. This was the anticipated moment for the wily beavers to bid a final adieu to their porcupine relatives.

The Assiniboins inhabiting the plains are far more numerous than their forest brethren. They number about 600[32] lodges; they own a greater number of horses, and the men, in general, are more robust and of a commanding stature. They are more expert in thieving, are greater topers, and are perpetually at war. They hunt the buffalo in the great plains between the Saskatchewan, the Red river, Missouri and Yellowstone.

The Crows, Blackfeet, Aricaras and Sioux are their most inveterate enemies. They speak nearly the same language as the Sioux, and have the same origin.

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[32] Fr. 300.

Monseigneur:[23]

The last few days we journeyed with the little Assiniboin camp, the aspect of the country offered nothing very interesting. We passed from valley to valley between two high chains of adamantine mountains, whose slopes are here and there ornamented with mounds of perpetual snow. A beautiful crystalline fountain issues from the centre of a perpendicular rock about 500 feet high, and then pours its waters over the plain in foam and mist.

The 27th we separated from the Assiniboins; the path conducted us through a thick forest of cypress; I am told this is the last — *Deo Gratias!* These belts of tall firs are very numerous, and form great obstacles and barriers to land communications between the east and west of the mountains. I have a little word of advice to give all who wish to visit these latitudes. At the entrance of each thick forest, one should render himself as slender, as short and as contracted as possible, imitating the different evolutions in all encounters of an intoxicated cavalier, but with skill and presence of mind. I mean to say, he should know how to balance himself — cling to the saddle in every form, to avoid the numerous branches that intercept his passage, ever ready to tear him into pieces, and flay his face and hands. Notwithstanding these precautions, it is rare to escape without paying tribute in some manner to the ungracious forest. I one day found myself in a singular and critical position: in attempting to pass under a tree that inclined across the path, I perceived a small branch in form of a hook, which threatened me. The first impulse was to extend myself upon the neck of my horse. Unavailing precaution! It caught me by the collar of my surtout, the horse still continuing his pace. Behold me suspended in the air — struggling like a fish at the end of a hook. Several respectable pieces of my coat floated, in all probability, a long time in the forest, as an undeniable proof of my having paid toll in passing through it. A crushed and torn hat — an eye black and blue — two deep scratches on the cheek, would, in a civilized country, have given me the appearance rather of a bully issuing from the Black Forest, than of a missionary.

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[23] Dated Rocky Mountain House, October 5, 1845.

To render a bad forest superlatively so, a great fall of snow is necessary. This special favor was lavished upon us in this last passage. Woe to the first pedestrians! The branches groan under the burden of their wintry shroud, and seem to present the motto: *"Si tangas, frangas!"* and assuredly, at each rubbing of the hat, the least touching of the arm or leg, a deluge of snow showers down upon the shivering cavalier and horse. Immediately the branch rises proudly as if in derision. On such occasions, there is nothing better to be done than to form a rear guard, and walk in the track of the predecessor.

In pursuing our route, the 27th, on one of the branches of the river "a la Biche,"[26] (Red Deer on the maps), we remarked several sulphurous fountains, which furnish great quantities of sulphur, and a coal mine, apparently very abundant.

I here beg the favor of a short digression from my subject. Coal abounds east of the Rocky Mountains, on the borders of the Missouri and Yellowstone, on the Saskatchewan and Athabasca. Saltpetre is found in abundance, and iron is not scarce in many parts of the mountains. I have already spoken of lead in the country of the Kootenais, the name of the Copper Mine river in the north indicates its riches; bars [probably not right] of this precious metal are discovered among the rocks bordering the river. Rock salt is found in powder, and very plentiful in the Snake country.

The valley is picturesque and variegated; flocks of sheep and goats contribute to beautify the scenery. We find many tracks of the bears and buffaloes; on seeing the latter my party became animated; for the buffaloes' flesh is, without contradiction, the most delicate of these regions. One is never tired of it. Hitherto, the animals of the mountains had abundantly satisfied our necessities, for the huntsmen killed no less than eighteen pieces, without counting the fowl and fish which are so plentiful in this country. The same evening the remainder of our provisions was consumed, and a buffalo chase was proposed for the following day. One of the sportsmen set out early, and at breakfast time we perceived him coming, with a round fat cow; immediately the ribs, tripes, etc., honored the fire with their presence. The rest of the day was spent in seeking fresh provisions.

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[26] Fr. *Rivière aux Daims.*

The 30th we continued our route through the valley, where a rivulet of clear water meanders. It is similar to all the other valleys west of the mountains, agreeably diversified with meadows, lakes and forests — the valley widens in proportion as one descends — the rocky banks disappear — the mountains decrease and appear insensibly to commingle with one another. Some are covered with forests even to their tops, others present cones, elevated ramparts, covered with rich verdure.

The 4th of October, after having traversed the great chain of mountains nineteen days in pursuit of the Blackfeet, we entered the vast plain — this ocean of prairies, inhabited by a multitude of roving savages, buried in the deepest superstition. The Blackfeet, Crows, Snakes, Aricaras, Assiniboins of the Plains, the Cheyennes, Comanches, Sioux, Omahas, Otoes, Pawnees, Kansas, Sauks, Iowas, etc., etc., are without pastors! We hope that divine Providence has not deferred the epoch when the darkness now overwhelming these immense regions will give place to the beneficial light of the gospel; that worthy and zealous pastors will come to guide in the way of salvation these poor and unhappy children of the desert, who, during so many ages, have groaned under the dominion of the devil, and among whom the war-song and the cry of carnage never ceased to resound. There, we hope, will reign in their turn peace and Christian charity, and the fragrance of divine love and praise ascend to the only true God.

The worthy Bishop of Juliopolis has established his See on Red river, a tributary of Lake Winnipeg, amidst the possessions of the Anglo-Indians. Already two of his zealous missionaries, Reverend Messrs. Thibault and Bourassa, have penetrated to the very foot of the Rocky Mountains, whilst other indefatigable priests have been employed for many years in extending the kingdom of God in this immense diocese. The population of Red river is about 5,500 souls, of whom 3,175 are Catholics. There are 730 houses inhabited. I had the honor of receiving a letter from the Reverend Mr. Thibault on my arrival in this latitude. He says:

"From the month of March to September last, I have labored among the mountain tribes; they are well disposed to embrace the faith. I cannot give you a better idea of these people than by comparing them to the Flatheads. I have baptized more than 500 children and adults in the course of this mission. As soon as I find the opportunity of a water conveyance, I shall continue my labors among these good savages, and extend my route as far as Mackenzie river. A rich harvest would be there found for many laborers in the sacred ministry, for this nation is populous and occupies a vast extent of country, without including several other nations I visited this summer. 'Come, then, to us,' said they, 'we, also, shall be happy to learn the joyful news you have brought our brethren of the mountains; we are to be pitied, not knowing the word of the Great Spirit; be, therefore, charitable to us — come, teach us the way of salvation — we will listen to it.'

"My fellow-laborer, Bourassa, set out in September, to announce the gospel to the Indians residing near the Peace river."

From Lake St. Anne, or Manitou, the ordinary residence of these two gentlemen, they extend their apostolic course to the different tribes on the rivers Athabasca and Mackenzie, Peace river and Slave lake.

Within the limits, as far as they have traveled, are found the Blackfeet, Crees, Assiniboins of the Forest and of the Mountains, Beaver Hunters, Flatside Dogs, Slaves and Deer Skins. (It is by these names that the different Indians are known among the whites and travelers.)

The great Indian district of the United States is (if I may say so) the only one deprived of spiritual succor and the means of salvation. It contains several hundred thousand savages. This vast territory is bounded on the northwest by the Anglo-Indian possessions — east by the Western States — south by Texas and Mexico — west by the Rocky Mountains. It contains many forts or trading-houses, in which the greater number of persons employed are Canadian Catholics or French creoles. The principal of these forts are, Fort des Corbeaux, or Alexander, on the Yellowstone, Fort Laramie, on a branch of the river Platte, Fort Osage, on the river of the same name — Fort Pied-noir, or Lewis, near the mouth of the river Maria, Fort Union near the mouth of the Yellowstone, Fort Berthold, Fort Mandan or Clark near the mouth of the little Missouri, Fort Pierre, Fort Lookout and Fort Vermillion at the mouth of this river, the other trading-houses among the Potawatomies of Council Bluffs and of Bellevue for the Otoes and Pawnees. The great depository which furnishes these forts and receives all the peltry and buffalo hides is kept at St. Louis.

Monseigneur Loras, Bishop of Dubuque, has sent two priests among the Sioux on the river St. Peter, a tributary of the Mississippi.

The Society of Jesus has a mission among the Potawatomies on Sugar creek, a tributary of the Osage river. The ladies of the Sacred Heart have an establishment here. During the summer of 1841 the late distinguished Madame de Galitzin, provincial of the Order in America, visited this section of the country for the purpose of founding among these rude savages a house of education, in which the hapless children of the desert now enjoy the benefit of being instructed in the Christian faith, of being formed to habits of industry and cleanliness, and acquiring a knowledge of those branches of education suited to their condition. These two missions are located near the frontiers of the States, and are the only ones in this immense territory.

The Upper Missouri and all its branches as far as the Rocky Mountains are without spiritual assistance. But wherever the priest has passed in traversing the desert, he has been received with open arms among the tribes that rove over this country — alas! so long a time forgotten and neglected!

The evening of the 4th of October, I arrived at the Fort des Montagnes,[25] belonging to the Honorable Hudson Bay Company, without having accomplished the object of my travels and my desires, namely, meeting the Blackfeet. The respectable and worthy commander of the fort, Mr. Harriote, [J. E.] [26] an Englishman by birth, is among the most amiable gentlemen I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. He invited and received into his hospitable fort the poor missionary, a Catholic and stranger, with a politeness and cordiality truly fraternal. These qualities characterize all the gentlemen of the Hudson Bay Company, and although Mr. Harriote is a Protestant, he encouraged me to visit the Blackfeet, who would soon arrive at the fort, promising me to use all his influence with these barbarians to obtain me a friendly reception. He has resided many years among them, nevertheless he did not conceal from me that I should soon be exposed to great dangers. "We are in the hands of God — may his holy will be done."

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[25] Rocky Mountain House; a prominent trading post of the Hudson Bay Company, built in 1805 by Simon Fraser at the eastern end of what was called the Rocky Mountain Portage, the carrying-place at the principal bend of Peace river.

[26] See le[illegible] from Harriote, p. 1559.

Monseigneur:[37]

A band of about twenty Crees, encamped near the fort, came to shake hands cordially with me on my arrival. The joy my presence seemed to occasion them proved that I was not the first priest they had seen. Moreover, the greater number wore medals and crosses. They informed me that they too had been so fortunate as to have a Blackgown, (Reverend Mr. Thibault) who taught them to know and serve the Great Spirit — and baptized all their little children, with the exception of three, who were absent on the occasion. These children were brought to me — I administered baptism to them, and at the same time to one of my guides, a Kootenai. During their stay at the fort, I gave them instructions every evening.

Two Crees, of the same band and family, father and son, had been killed in a quarrel two years since. The presence of the offending party for the first time since the perpetration of the murder, rekindled in the others that spirit of rancor and revenge so natural to an Indian's breast, and which only the Christian religion is able to mollify, and there was every reason to apprehend fatal consequences from the old feud.

With the approbation of Mr. Harriote, I assembled them all in the fort; the Governor himself had the kindness to be my interpreter. He made a long discourse on the obligation and necessity of their coming to a sincere reconciliation; the matter was discussed in form, each Indian giving his opinion in turn, with a good sense and moderation that surprised me. I had the pleasure and satisfaction of seeing the calumet passed around the assembly. This is the solemn pledge of peace — the token of Indian brotherhood — the most formal declaration of the entire forgetfulness and sincere pardon of an injury.

The Cree nation is considered very powerful, and numbers more than 600 wigwams. This tribe is one of the most formidable enemies of the Blackfeet, and continually encroaches upon the territory of its adversaries. The preceding year they carried off more than 600 horses. The actual [present] limit of the country they traverse extends from the bases of the Rocky Mountains, between the two forks of the Saskatchewan, some distance beyond the Red river. Their turbulent and warlike spirit and rapacity for plunder, especially for horses, are among the great obstacles which retard the conversion of the larger portion of this tribe.

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[37] Letter dated Fort of the Mountains, October 30, 1845.

The example of their brethren, who listen with docility to the exhortations of their zealous and indefatigable missionary will, we trust, produce fruit in due time and be imitated by the entire nation.

To give you an idea of their military discipline, and of the profound superstition in which these unfortunate people are still immersed, I will relate to you some of their proceedings.

The Crees were meditating a deadly stroke upon the Blackfeet, and for this purpose they collected all their ready forces, amounting to more than 800 warriors. Before setting out in quest of the enemy, every species of juggling and witchcraft imaginable was resorted to in order to secure the success of the expedition. It was decided that a young girl, with a bandage over her eyes, should be placed at the head of the Indian army, and thus blindfold serve as a guide to the combatants. In case of success the heroine was destined to become the bride of the most valiant. According to the Oracle, none but the great chief himself had the privilege of shoeing or unshoeing her.

This concluded, they began their march, intoxicated with confidence and presumption, following this extraordinary guide over hills and valleys, ravines, marshes and swamps. One day she would direct her steps toward the north, the next to the south or west — the point of the compass mattered nought — the manitou of war was supposed to guide her, and day after day the infatuated Crees continued to follow the steps of the blindfolded Indian. They had already penetrated far into the plain, when they were discovered by a party of seven Blackfeet. The latter might easily have escaped under favor of the night, but the partisan, or Blackfoot chieftain, a man of undaunted courage, determined to oppose this formidable force. With the aid of their poniards they made themselves a hollow, in which they took shelter.

The following morning at daybreak the 800 champions surrounded their feeble prey. The first who pressed forward to dislodge them were driven back several times, with the loss of seven men and fifteen wounded. The failure of ammunition at length put the Blackfeet at the mercy of the Crees, by whom they were cut into pieces. The first engagement threw the victorious party into consternation, for they too numbered seven killed and fifteen wounded. They removed the bandage from the young heroine's eyes, and the manitous whom they had thought so propitious being now judged unfavorable to their warlike projects, the warriors hastily dispersed, taking the nearest road back to their respective homes.

The Crees have a rather singular custom among them, and one contrary to the practice of other nations. They stain the faces of the warriors who fall in combat, clothe them in their richest ornaments, and thus expose them in places conspicuous to their enemies. They place near them their guns, bows and arrows, to show that in their death there was no cause for compassion; and this they do purposely that they may be cut into pieces — an opportunity which an enemy never suffers to escape, and which a Cree warrior regards as the height of his wishes. Other nations, on the contrary, carry off and conceal their dead, to save them from the rapacity and insults of their enemies, and to be cut into pieces, even after death, is considered a great dishonor among them. The Crees and Sauteux [Saulteurs] are allies, and considerably intermixed by reciprocal marriages. The latter form the most numerous and widelydiffused nation of these parts. They are to be met with from the confines of lower Canada even to the foot of the Rocky Mountains.

This is also the nation of medicine, *par excellence:* — for all pretend to be jugglers, and sell their medicines and quackery at a high price. In consequence of this attachment to their old superstitious practices, and the great profits they derive from them, the seeds of the divine word have hitherto fallen upon an unprofitable soil. An adroit impostor who has been baptized, and who is, moreover, a great medicine man among them, has contributed not a little to keep his nation in an obstinate ignorance, which makes them prefer the shades of paganism to the beneficial light of the gospel. Falling one day into a species of lethargy, it was thought that he had expired — but recovering after a short time, he assembled his band and told them the following story:

"Immediately after my death I repaired to the heaven of the white men, or Christians, where the Great Spirit and Jesus Christ dwell, but they refused to admit me on account of my red skin. I then went to the country where the souls of my ancestors are, and there, too, I was refused admittance on account of my baptism. I am, therefore, come back to this earth, to renounce the promises I made in baptism and resume my medicine bag, hoping to expiate my former error by my sincere attachment to jugglery, and thus render myself once more worthy of the beautiful and spacious plains of that happy and delightful abode, where reigns everlasting spring, and numberless flocks and herds afford an abundant and everlasting subsistence to all the inhabitants of the Indian Elysium."

This extravagant report, which has been circulated throughout the whole tribe and among the neighboring people, has greatly contributed to attach them to their old customs and superstitions — and make them turn a deaf ear to the instructions of their worthy missionary.

The Reverend Mr. Belcourt has, notwithstanding, succeeded in converting a considerable number, whom he has persuaded to renounce the illusions of their brethren, and united in a village at St. Paul des Sauteux, where they persevere fervently in all the practices of religion. The number of faithful, in this spot, increases every year.

At length, on the 25th of October, thirteen Blackfeet arrived at the fort. They saluted me with a politeness truly *à la sauvage*, rough and cordial at the same time. The old chief embraced me quite tenderly when he learned the object of my journey. He was distinguished from his companions by his dress — being decorated from head to foot with eagles' plumes, and wearing a large breast-plate in form of medallion, figured with blue, as a mark of distinction. He was profuse in attention to me, making me sit beside him whenever I went to visit them in their apartment — shaking me affectionately by the hand and amicably rubbing my cheeks with his scarlet-painted nose. He cordially invited me to his country, offering to be my guide and to introduce me to his people. The difference of physiognomy existing between the Indians inhabiting the plains east of the mountains and those near the upper waters of the Columbia is as great as the stupendous rocks that separate them. The latter are remarkable for their mildness, serenity and affability, while cruelty, craft — the word blood, in fine, may be read in every feature of the Blackfoot Indian. Scarcely could an innocent hand be found in the whole nation. The Lord, however, is all-powerful —" from stones he can raise up children unto Abraham," and, full of confidence in the treasures of his holy grace and mercies, I purpose to visit them. The essential point and my greatest perplexity is, to find a good and faithful interpreter; the only one now at the fort is a suspicious and dangerous man: all his employers speak ill of him — he makes fine promises. In the alternative of either renouncing my project or being of some utility to those poor unfortunate Indians, I accept his services. May he be faithful to his engagement!

Monseigneur:[28]

The year 1845 will be a memorable epoch in the sad annals of the Blackfeet nation. It has been a year of disasters. In two skirmishes with the Flatheads and Kalispels, they lost twenty-one warriors. The Crees have carried off a great number of their horses, and twenty-seven scalps. The Crows have struck them a mortal blow — fifty families, the entire band of Little Robe,[29] were lately massacred, and 160 women and children have been led into captivity.

What a dreadful state for these unfortunate beings! In the first excitement, numbers of the captives were sacrificed by the Crow squaws to the *manes* of their husbands, brothers, fathers or children. The survivors were condemned to slavery. The scarlet fever shortly after made its appearance in the conquerors' camp, and spread rapidly from lodge to lodge. The Crows thought themselves attacked by smallpox. The Blackfeet had suffered from this scourage a few years previous, and thousands had fallen victims to it.

The Crows, therefore, interrogated their captives to know by what means they had escaped death. A dark spirit of vengeance seized the latter; they counseled cold baths as the only efficacious remedy to stop the progress of the disease. The sick immediately plunged into the water, and mothers went to the river to bathe their little children. Some plunged into their graves; others gave up their last sigh while endeavoring to reach the shore — and disconsolate mothers returned to their cabins with dead or expiring infants in their arms. Cries of despair succeeded to the shouts of victory — desolation and mourning replaced the fanatic, barbarous joy of the Crows. Death visited every tent of the victorious camp!

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[28] Letter dated Fort of the Mountains, October 30, 1845.

[29] This statement no doubt explains the disappearance from contemporary Indian literature of the Little Robe band of Blackfeet. Catlin spoke them in the early 30's, but they seem to have been little known, and were probably not a large band.

The tradition of man's creation and future immortality exists among most of the Indian tribes I have had the opportunity of visiting and questioning on the subject. Those who live by fishery suppose their heaven to be full of lakes and rivers, abounding in fish, whose enchanted shores and verdant islands produce fruits of every kind.

I encamped on the banks of two lakes to the east of the Rocky Mountains, which the Blackfeet call the *lake of men* and the *lake of women*. According to their traditions, from the first of these issued a band of young men, handsome and vigorous, but poor and naked. From the second an equal number of ingenious and industrious young women, who constructed and made themselves clothing. They lived a long time separate and unknown to each other, until the great Manitou Wizâkéschak, or Old Man, (still invoked by the Blackfeet) visited them; he taught them to slay animals in the chase, but they were yet ignorant of the art of dressing skins. Wizâkéschak conducted them to the dwelling of the young women, who received their guests with dances and cries of joy. Shoes, leggings, shirts and robes, garnished with porcupine quills, were presented them. Each young woman selected her guest, and presented him with a dish of seeds and roots; the men, desiring to contribute to the entertainment, sought the chase, and returned loaded with game. The women liked the meat, and admired the strength, skill and bravery of the hunters. The men were equally delighted with the beauty of their trappings, and admired the industry of the women. Both parties began to think they were necessary to each other, and Wizâkéschak presided at the solemn compact in which it was agreed that the men should become the protectors of the women, and provide all necessaries for their support: whilst all other family cares would devolve upon the women.

The Blackfeet squaws often bitterly complain of the astonishing folly of their mothers in accepting such a proposition; declaring, if the compact were yet to be made, they would arrange it in a very different manner.

The Blackfoot heaven is a country composed of sandy hills, which they call *Espatchèkiè*, whither the soul goes after death, and where they will find again all the animals they have killed and all the horses they have stolen. The buffalo, hind and stag abound there. In speaking of the departed, a Blackfoot never says such a one is dead, but *Espatchekiè ètapo* — to the Sand Hills he is gone!

Monseigneur.[30]

I arranged with the thirteen Blackfeet of whom I spoke in my last, that they should precede me among their people, to pave the way, as it were, and prepare their minds to receive me. Everything seemed propitious, and accordingly on the 31st of October I took leave of the friendly Mr. Harriote. I was accompanied by my interpreter and a young half-breed of the Cree nation, who had charge of the horses. Notwithstanding his good resolutions, my interpreter did not long leave me in doubt of his true character. The wolf cannot remain concealed beneath the sheep's clothing. He became sullen and peevish, always choosing to halt in those places where the poor beasts of burden could find nothing to eat after their long day's journey. The farther we penetrated into the desert, the more and more sulky he became. It was impossible to draw from him a single pleasant word, and his incoherent mutterings and allusions became subjects of serious apprehension. Thus passed ten sorrowful days; my last two nights had been nights of anxiety and watching; when fortunately I encountered a Canadian, with his Indian family, on whom I prevailed to remain with me some time. The following day my interpreter disappeared. Although my situation was extremely precarious in this dan-

[30] Letter dated Fort Augustus on the Saskatchewan, December 31, 1845.

gerous desert, without interpreter, without guide, yet I could not but feel relieved of a heavy burden by the departure of this sullen and gloomy fellow. Had it not been for my opportune meeting with the Canadian, it is probable I should not have escaped his deep-laid scheme against me.

Friends and travelers in the desert, beware of choosing for your guide or placing your dependence on a morose half-breed, especially if he has been for some time a resident among the savages; for such men usually possess all the faults of the white man joined to the cunning of the Indian. I determined to continue my route in search of a Canadian interpreter,[31] who we understood was some distance in advance of us on the same road. For eight successive days we wandered on in that labyrinth of valleys, but in vain; although in the heart of their territory, neither the Canadian nor the Blackfeet were to be found. Large marauding parties of the Crees were beating the country at that time, and it appeared evident from the tracks that they had carried everything before them. It snowed without intermission during four days — our poor horses were nearly exhausted — my wallet contained nothing but crumbs — the passage from the east to the western side of the mountains was become impracticable, and I had no alternative but to repair to one of the forts of the Hudson Bay Company, and beg hospitality during the inclement season.

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[31] June 12, 1850, Father De Smet wrote from St. Louis (in French), as follows, to one "Monsieur Monroe, Pays des Pieds-noirs," who is evidently the one here in question:

I cannot let Mr. Harvey start without giving you a sign of life and some little news of myself. Though I have never had the good fortune to see you, I have heard your name often, and I have always heard you so well spoken of that I have for years past considered you a dear and personally familiar friend. Mr. Harvey has been kind enough to come and see me; he has told me a great deal about you, and I have listened with the greatest pleasure. Ah! how much I regret that I was so hindered by circumstances, and that I did not meet you on my first visit to the Blackfoot territory. I traveled through a labyrinth of narrow valleys, on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, and plains that seemed endless — always searching for you — I looked forward to doing immense good among the savages, through you. I followed your traces to your encampment at the foot of the Quilloux mountain, where I found the signs that you had left, evidently for my benefit — then I took up your trail with fresh courage, believing you to be very near; later a little misunderstanding on the part of my guides caused me to lose them, and we began wandering as chance might lead, to the point of discouragement. Then snow began to fall in great flakes and to cover the ground with a thick layer — and with it vanished my hope of finding you, that season, in some Blackfoot camp. So I deferred my visit to the following summer, and made my way in haste back to the plains, where the snow was not so deep, and so to Fort Augustus on the Saskatchewan. There again I expected you, but in vain, for two months. The worthy and respectable Messrs Rowan and Harriote, at this post, were very attentive to me, and I shall always be extremely grateful to them.

The entire region in the vicinity of the first eastern chain of the Rocky Mountains, serving as their base for thirty or sixty miles, is extremely fertile, abounding in forests, plains, prairies, lakes, streams and mineral springs. The

No doubt you would like to know whether I have entirely given up returning to the Indian country; whether I shall be seen again among the Blackfeet? This is my answer: I have not given it up at all — I desire ardently and with all the sincerity of my heart to see my friends the Blackfeet again, to find myself in the midst of their little children, whom I tenderly love, and of whom a great number have already been regenerated in the holy waters of baptism. * * * What prevents my leaving St. Louis is this — I am filling a position which keeps me very much occupied, and there is no one to take my place — we have many churches, many colleges, many schools, in the States, and unfortunately there are too few of us for so great a task. I hope that other Fathers may soon come to us from Europe, and that then I can be released, and allowed the fulfilment of my desire, permission to tread once more the Indian soil. * * * So you see that the enterprise is not abandoned, but rather postponed.

From John Rowand, Edmonton, December 3, 1845.

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Beware, my good sir, of your interpreter Bird. He *hates* everything connected with the French or Canadians. Munroe is not a bad sort of man, but I cannot recommend him as fit to interpret what you have to say to the natives. Munroe does well enough at a trading post and in the shop.

rivers and streams are innumerable, and on every side offer situations favorable for the construction of mills. The northern and southern branches of the Saskatchewan water the district I have traversed, for a distance of about 300 miles. Forests of pine, cypress, thorn, poplar and aspen trees, as well as others of different kinds, occupy a large portion of it, covering the declivities of the mountains and banks of the rivers.

These, ordinarily, take their rise in the highest chains, whence they issue in every direction like so many veins. The beds and sides of these rivers are pebbly, and their courses rapid, but as they recede from the mountains they widen and the currents lose something of their impetuosity. Their waters are usually very clear. In this climate wens are not unfrequent. The country would be capable of supporting a large population, and the soil is favorable for the produce of barley, corn, potatoes, peas and beans, which grow here as well as in the more southern countries.

Are these vast and innumerable fields of hay forever destined to be consumed by fire, or perish in the autumnal snows? How long shall these superb forests be the haunts of wild beasts? And these inexhaustible quarries,, these abundant mines of coal, lead, sulphur, iron, copper and saltpetre — can it be that they are doomed to remain forever inactive? Not so — the day will come when some laboring hand will give them value: a strong, active and enterprising people are destined to fill this spacious void. The wild beasts will ere long give place to our domestic animals; flocks and herds will graze in the beautiful meadows that border the numberless mountains, hills, valleys and plains of this extensive region. A large portion of the surface of the country is covered with artificial lakes, formed by the beavers. On our way we had frequently occasion to remark, with wonder and admiration, the extent and height of their ingeniously constructed dams and solid lodges. These are remains of the admirable little republics, concerning which so many wonders have justly been recorded.

Not more than half a century ago, such was the number of beavers in this region, that a good hunter could kill 100 in a month's space.

I reached Fort Augustus[22] or Edmonton toward the close of the year. Its respectable commandant, the worthy Mr. Rowand, received me with all the tenderness of a father, and together with his inestimable [?] family, showed me every kindness and attention. Never shall I have it in my power to cancel the debt of gratitude I owe them. May heaven protect and repay them with its choice blessings; such is the most sincere prayer of a poor priest, who will ever remember them.

I must await a more favorable moment for visiting the Blackfeet. The skirmishing parties appear to be still scouring the country. The tidings which reach us concerning them tell only of plunder and bloodshed.

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[22] Fort Edmonton, "New" Fort Augustus or Upper Fort des Prairies; a trading-post of the Northwest Company, established about 1798, succeeding a much older Fort Augustus some twenty miles below; site of the present Edmonton, Alberta, a town of several hundred inhabitants, having a railroad and electric lights and agricultural prospects; though still remaining the principal outlet for the furs of the north country.

CHAPTER V.[1]

RETURN FROM FORT AUGUSTUS TO THE MISSION.

Good Governor Rowand — Occupations of two months — Visits Lake St. Anne — Impatient to get away in spring — Northward by dog sled for nine days — The Athabasca country — A Catholic Indian with a large family — Fort Jasper and Colin Fraser — They all go out for meat — Mount De Smet — Terrific scenery — A mountain of ice — Meets the Hudson Bay Company's brigade — Old friends — Takes to snowshoes — Extreme suffering and exhaustion — The bright side of it — Comes to the Columbia and a feast — Down the river — Tragedies — Geography — Reaches Fort Colville — Father Nobili in New Caledonia.

Fort Jasper,[2] April 16, 1846.

Monseigneur:

FORT EDMONTON or Augustus is the great emporium of the Hudson Bay Company in the districts of upper Saskatchewan and Athabasca: Forts Jasper, Assiniboin, Little Slave Lake, on the river Athabasca, Forts des Montagnes, Pitt, Carrollton, Cumberland, on the Saskatchewan, depend on it. The respectable and worthy Mr. Rowan,[3] Governor of this immense district, unites to all the amiable and polite qualities of a perfect gentleman, those of a sincere and hospitable friend; his goodness and paternal tenderness render him a true patriarch amidst his charming and numerous family. He is esteemed and venerated by all the surrounding tribes, and though advanced in age, he possesses extraordinary activity.

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[1] This chapter follows the English text of the *Oregon Missions*, and comprises Letters XIV, XV, XVI and XVII of that work (Letters XIII, XIV, XV and XVI, *Missions de l'Orègon*), published as letters to Bishop Hughes and to the Provincial of Missouri, Reverend J. C. Van de Velde, and dated as by footnotes inserted at the proper places.

[2] Jasper House or Jasper's House; a trading-post built about 1800, and said to have been named curiously for Jasper Hawes or House, clerk in charge.

[3] Probably John Rowand, who entered the service of the Northwest Company in 1800; or perhaps his son, Doctor Rowand, called "of Quebec," who was born at Fort Edmonton, educated abroad, and who accompanied Sir George Simpson, in his tour around the world in 1841, from Edmonton as far as Honolulu. See letters from Rowand, p. 1561.

The number of servants at Edmonton, including women and children, is about eighty. They form a well-regulated family. Besides a large garden, a field of potatoes and wheat, belonging to the establishment, the lakes, forests and plains of the neighborhood furnish provisions in abundance. On my arrival at the fort, the icehouse contained 30,000 white-fish, each weighing four pounds, and 500 buffaloes, the ordinary amount of the winter provisions. Such is the quantity of aquatic birds in the season, that sportsmen often send to the fort carts full of fowls. Eggs are picked up by thousands in the straw and reeds of the marshes.

The greater number of those employed being Catholics, I found sufficient occupation. Every morning I catechized the children and gave an instruction; in the evening, after the labors of the day, I recited the prayers for the honorable commander and his servants. I must acknowledge, to the credit of the inhabitants of Edmonton, that their assiduity and attention to religious duties and the kindness and respectful regard evinced for me, were a source of great consolation during my sojourn of two months among them. May God, who has granted them so liberally and plentifully the dews of the earth, enrich them likewise with those of heaven; such is the most sincere wish and prayer of a friend who will never forget them.

I visited Lake St. Anne, the ordinary residence of Messrs. Thibault and Bourassa; the latter gentleman was absent. The distance from the fort to the lake is about fifty miles. I mentioned this interesting mission in my preceding letters, and I will now say a word relative to the country. The surface of this region is flat for the most part, undulating in some places — diversified with forests and meadows, and lakes teeming with fish. In Lake St. Anne alone were caught, last autumn, more than 70,000 white-fish, the most delicious of the kind; they are taken with the line at every season of the year.

Notwithstanding the rigor and duration of the winter in this northern region, the earth in general appears fertile; vegetation is so forward in the spring and summer, that potatoes, wheat and barley, together with other vegetables of Canada, come to maturity. Fall wheat would, in my judgment, yield better than spring wheat, which they sow at present. Lake St. Anne forms one of a chain of lakes; I counted eleven of them, which flow into the Saskatchewan by the little Sturgeon river. Innumerable republics of beavers formerly existed there; each lake, each marsh, each river, bears even to this day proofs of their labors. What I here say of beavers is applicable to almost all the Hudson territory. When the reindeer, buffalo and moose abounded, the Crees were then peaceful possessors; the animals have disappeared, and with them the ancient lords of the country. Scarcely do we meet with a solitary hut — but now and then the tracks of some large animal. Seventeen families of half-breeds, descendants of English Canadians and savages, have assembled and settled around their missionaries. The Crees have gained the buffalo plains, and they contend for them with the Blackfeet, whose mortal foes they have become.

In proportion as the rigors of winter began to give place to the cheering dawn of spring, simultaneously did my pulse beat to approach nearer the mountain, there to await a favorable opportunity to cross it, so that I might arrive as early as possible at the mission of St. Ignatius.

The 12th of March, I bade farewell to the respectable Rowand family and to all the servants of the fort. I was accompanied by three brave half-breeds, whom Mr. Thibault was so kind as to procure me. At this season the whole country lies buried in snow, and voyages are made in sledges drawn by dogs. Our provisions and baggage were conveyed in two of these sledges; the third, drawn by four dogs, was reserved for me. I found this mode of traveling quite a novelty; and on the glittering ice of the rivers and lakes, it was particularly convenient and agreeable. The third day we encamped near Black Eagle lake, which abounds in white-fish; on the 6th, we arrived at Fort Assiniboin, built in a meadow on the river Athabasca, where it is 233 fathoms broad, which breadth it seems to preserve more or less until it leaves the Rocky Mountains; its current is extremely rapid. In the spring it can be descended in three days from Fort Jasper to Fort Assiniboin, a distance of more than 300 miles. With our sledges we were nine days accomplishing the journey. The bed of the river is studded with islands, which, by their various positions and features, render the prospect very agreeable. Its shores are covered with thick forests of pine intersecting rocks and high hills which embellish and give a touch of the picturesque to the general monotony of the desert.

The principal branches are the Pembina, which measures 464 feet across — the river des Avirons, 128 feet; the river des Gens Libres, McLeod's Fork, and Baptist Berland river, are about eighty fathoms wide at their mouth. The rivers du Vieux, du Milieu, des Prairies and des Roches form beautiful currents. Lake Jasper, eight miles in length, is situated at the base of the first great mountain chain. The fort of the same name, and the second lake, are twenty miles higher, and in the heart of the mountains. The rivers Violin and Medicine on the southern side, and the Assiniboin on the northern, must be crossed to arrive there, and to reach the height of land at the Committee's Punch Bowl, we cross the rivers Maline, Gens de Colets, Miette and Trou, which we ascended to its source. The river Medicine mingles its waters with those of the north branch of the Saskatchewan; the Assiniboin and Gens de Colets with those of the Boucane, a tributary of Peace river. The waters of the Miette have their source upon the same height with some branches of the river Frazer, which crosses New Caledonia.

Some years since, the valleys and high forests of Athabasca were exclusively appropriated to the chase by the Assiniboins of the Forest: the scarcity of game forced them to quit their land — since their departure the animals have increased in an astonishing manner. In various places on the river, we saw ravages of the beavers which I should have taken for recent encampments of savages, so great a quantity of felled trees was there. Many wandering families of the Carrier tribe and Ashiganés or Sock Indians of New Caledonia, compelled by hunger, have quitted their country, traversed the east of the mountains, and now range the valleys of this region in quest of food. They nourish themselves with roots, and whatever they can catch; many of them have their teeth worn to the gums by the earth and sand they swallow with their nourishment. In winter they fare well: for then the moose, elk and reindeer are plentiful. The reindeer feed on a kind of white moss, and the paunch is considered delicious when the food is half digested. By way of a dainty morsel, the Indians pluck out the eyes of fish with the end of the fingers and swallow them raw, likewise the tripes with their whole contents, without further ceremony than placing them an instant on the coals, from thence into the omnibus or general reservoir, without even undergoing the operation of the jaws.

The Montagnès Indians inhabit the lower part of Athabasca, also the great lake of that name. The elk is very common, and the reindeer are found in large bands; the chase of the latter is both easy and singular. They regularly bend their course northward in autumn, and return toward the south in the spring. The Indians know their usual crossing-places over the lakes and rivers — and when the herd (often many hundreds in number) are in the water, and approach the opposite shore, the huntsmen leave their concealment, jump into their light canoes, and yell with all their strength to make them return to the centre; there they harass them, continually driving them from the shore, until the poor animals become exhausted; then begins the work of carnage; they are killed without difficulty by daggers and darts, and it rarely happens that one effects his escape. In winter they snare them. They cover their huts and dress themselves with the skins of the reindeer. Lakes and marshes being so numerous in this country, swans, geese, bustards and ducks of various species, come hither in thousands during the spring and autumn. Then the savages travel over these marshy places on snow-shoes in quest of eggs, on which they mostly subsist during this season. Often squares of several acres are found covered with nests. White-fish, carp, dory, the large salmon trout and unknown fish, abound in all these lakes and rivers.

Two missionaries, a Father of the Order of Oblats of Marseilles and a Canadian priest, are on the way with the intention of penetrating into the interior of the country. The reception given to Mr. Thibault last summer by the Montagnès leaves little doubt of the happy results of this praiseworthy and holy enterprise. On the banks of Lake Jasper, we met an old Iroquois called Louis Kwaragkwanté, or Walking Sun, accompanied by his family, thirty-six in number. He has been forty years absent from his country, during which he has never seen a priest — has dwelt for the last thirty-four years in the forests of the Athabasca and on Peace river and subsisted by hunting and fishing. The good old man was overwhelmed with joy, and the children experienced a similar feeling with their father. I will give you the old man's words in English, on learning that I was a priest: "How glad I am to have come here, for I have not seen a priest for many years. To-day I behold a priest, as I did in my own country — my heart rejoices — wherever you go I shall follow you with my children — all will hear the word of prayer — all will have the happiness to receive baptism. Therefore my heart rejoices and is happy." The little Iroquois camp immediately set out to follow me to Fort Jasper. Most of them know their prayers in Iroquois. I remained fifteen days at the fort, instructing them in the duties of religion — after mass, on Easter Sunday, all were regenerated in the waters of baptism, and seven marriages renewed and blessed. The number of baptized amounted to forty-four; among whom was the lady of Mr. [Colin] Fraser, (superintendent of the fort) and four of his children and two servants.

Monseigneur:[4]

Provisions becoming scarce at the fort, and the large Iroquois family being encamped round about, resolved to remain until my departure, in order to assist at the instructions, we should have found ourselves in an embarrassing situation had not Mr. Fraser come to our relief, by proposing that we should leave the fort and accompany himself and family to the Lake of Islands, where we could subsist partly on fish. As the distance was not great, we accepted this invitation, and set out to the number of fifty-four persons and twenty dogs. I count the latter, because we were as much obliged to provide for them as for ourselves. A little note of the game killed by our hunters during the twenty-six days of our abode at this place will perhaps afford you some interest; at least, it will make you acquainted with the animals of the country, and prove that the mountaineers of Athabasca are blessed with good appetites. Animals killed — twelve moose deer, two reindeer, thirty large mountain sheep or bighorn, two porcupines, 210 hares, one beaver, two muskrats, twenty-four bustards, 115 ducks, twenty-one pheasants, one snipe, one eagle, one owl; add to this from thirty to fifty fine white-fish every day and twenty trout, and then judge whether or not our people had reason to complain; yet we heard them constantly saying: "How hard living is here? The country is miserably poor — we are obliged to fast."

As the time approached at which I was to leave my new children in Christ, they earnestly begged leave to honor me, before my departure, with a little ceremony to prove their attachment, and that their children might always remember him who had first put them in the way of life. Each one discharged his musket in the direction of the highest mountain, a large rock jutting out in the form of a sugar loaf, and with three loud hurrahs gave it my name. This mountain is more than 14,000 feet high, and is covered with perpetual snow.

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[4] Letter dated Foot of the Great Glacier, at the Source of the Athabasca, May 6, 1845.

On the 25th of April I bade farewell to my kind friend Mr. Fraser and his amiable children, who had treated me with every mark of attention and kindness.

All the men in the camp insisted on honoring me with an escort, and accompanied me a distance of ten miles. Here we separated, each one affectionately pressed my hand — mutual good wishes were exchanged — tears flowed on both sides — and I was left with my companions in one of those wild ravines where nothing meets the eye, but ranges of gloomy mountains rising on all sides, like so many impassable barriers.

Upper Athabasca is, unquestionably, the most elevated part of North America. All its mountains are prodigious, and their rocky and snow-capt summits seem to lose themselves in the clouds. At this season, immense masses of snow often become loosened and roll down the mountains' sides with a terrific noise, that resounds throughout these quiet solitudes like distant thunder — so irresistible is the velocity of their descent, that they frequently carry with them enormous fragments of rock, and force a passage through the dense forests which cover the base of the mountain. Every day, and often every hour, the noise of ten avalanches descending at once breaks upon the ear; on every side we see them precipitated with a frightful rapidity.

From these mountains, the majestic rivers of the north, the upper branch of the Saskatchewan, the two great forks of the Mackenzie, the Athabasca and Peace rivers, the Columbia, and Frazer at the west, derive the greater part of their waters.

In the neighborhood of the Miette river, we fell in with one of those poor families of Porteurs or "Itoaten," of New Caledonia, of whom I spoke to you in a former letter; they saw us from the summit of the mountain that overlooks the valley through which we were passing, and perceiving we were whites, hastened down to meet us. They appeared overjoyed at seeing us, particularly when they discovered that I was a Black-gown; they crowded around me and begged me to baptize them, with an earnestness that affected me to tears, though I was able to grant this favor to only two of their smallest children; the others required instruction, but there was no interpreter. I exhorted them to return soon to their own country, where they would find a Black-gown (Father Nobili) who would instruct them. They made the sign of the cross, recited some prayers in their own language, and sang several hymns with great apparent devotion. The condition of these people seemed very wretched; they had no clothes but a few rags and some pieces of skins, and yet, notwithstanding their extreme poverty, they laid at my feet the mountain sheep they had just killed.

The history of a poor young woman, one of their number, deserves to be recorded, as it affords a lively picture of the dangers and afflictions to which these unfortunate people are often exposed. When she was about fifteen years of age, her father, mother and brothers, together with another family of her nation, were surprised in the wood by a party of Assiniboin warriors and massacred without mercy. At the time of this horrid scene, the young girl was in another part of the forest with her two sisters, both younger than herself; they succeeded in concealing themselves, and thus escaped falling into the hands of the assassins. The hapless orphan wandered about the desert for two years, without meeting any human being, without knife or hatchet, making her fire by means of two pieces of wood, subsisting on roots, wild fruits and porcupines. In winter she sheltered herself in the abandoned den of a bear. The sisters left her at the end of the first year, since which they have never been heard of. At length, after three years, she was fortunately found by a good Canadian, who took her home, provided her with comfortable food and clothing, and six months after restored her to her tribe.

We resumed our journey the following day, and arrived about nightfall on the banks of the Athabasca, at the spot called the Great Crossing.[8] Here we deviated from the course of that river, and entered the valley of the Fourche du Trou.

As we approached the highlands the snow became much deeper. On the 1st of May we reached the great Bature, which has all the appearance of a lake just drained of its waters. Here we pitched our tent to await the arrival of the Columbia brigade, who always pass by this route on the way to Canada and York Factory. Not far from the place of our encampment, we found a new object of surprise and admiration; an immense mountain of pure ice, 1,500 feet high, enclosed between two enormous rocks. So great is the transparency of this beautiful ice, that we can easily distinguish objects in it to the depth of more than six feet. One would say by its appearance, that in some sudden and extraordinary swell of the river immense icebergs had been forced between these rocks, and had there piled themselves on one another so as to form this magnificent glacier, What gives some color of probability to this conjecture is that on the other side of the glacier there is a large lake of considerable elevation. From the base of this gigantic iceberg the river du Trou takes its rise.

The brigade from the Columbia have just arrived. I must, therefore, take this present opportunity, the only one I shall have for a long time, of sending you my letters, and before closing this, permit me again to recommend myself and all my missions to your holy sacrifices and fervent prayers.

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[8] Fr. Grande Traverse.

Very Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:[6]

By my last letter to the distinguished Prelate of New York, in which I gave my different missionary excursions during 1845-6 among several tribes of the Rocky Mountains, you have learned that I had arrived at the base of the Great Glacier, the source of the river du Trou, which is a tributary of the Athabasca, or Elk river.[7] I will now give to your Reverence the continuation of my arduous and difficult journey across the main chain of the Rocky Mountains and down the Columbia, on my return to my dear brethren in Oregon.

Toward the evening of the 6th of May, [1846] we discovered, at the distance of about three miles, the approach of two men on snow-shoes, who soon joined us. They proved to be the forerunners of the English brigade[8] which, in the spring of each year, goes from Fort Vancouver to York Factory, situated at the mouth of the river Nelson, near 58° north latitude. In the morning my little train was ready early; we proceeded, and after a march of eight miles we fell in with the gentlemen of the Hudson Bay Company. The time of our reunion was short, but interesting and joyful. The great melting of the snow had already begun, and we were both obliged to be on the alert to cross in due time the now swelling rapids and rivers. The news between travelers who meet in the mountains is quickly conveyed to one another. The leaders of the company were my old friends, Mr. Ermatinger, of the Honorable Hudson Bay Company, and two distinguished officers of the English army, Captains Ward and Vavasseur,[9] whom I had the honor of entertaining last year at the Great Kalispel lake. Captain Ward is the gentleman who had the kindness to take charge of my letters for the States and for Europe.

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[6] Letter dated Boat Encampment on the Columbia, May 10, 1846.

[7] Fr. rivière à la Biche.

[8] The actual work of collecting furs necessarily took place at points remote from civilized markets. The American Fur Company and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company operated in the far-off country on the headwaters of the Missouri and to the south. Their base of supplies was at St. Louis. The Hudson Bay Company operated in the valleys of the Columbia and its tributaries. Their base of supplies was at Montreal. Annually, expeditions traveled the long distances from these bases to the fields of operation, carrying out supplies and bringing back the furs, and transacting the year's business between the companies and the partners in the field. The American Fur Company conducted its expeditions by steamboat; the Rocky Mountain Fur Company overland by caravan; and the Hudson Bay Company by lake, river, and land by what they called the annual "brigade."

Fifteen Indians of the Kettle Falls tribe accompanied him. Many of them had scaled the mountains with 150 pounds weight upon their backs. The worthy Captain Ward spoke many things in praise of them. He admired their honesty and civility, and above all, their sincere piety and great regularity in their religious duties; every morning and evening they were seen retiring a short distance from the camp, to sing one or two hymns and join in common prayer. "I hope," added the Captain, "I shall never forget the example which these poor but good savages have given me. During the time that they were with me I was much struck by their becoming deportment, and I have never seen more sincere piety than they exhibited."

The gentlemen of the English brigade were now at the end of their chief difficulties and troubles. They gladly threw away their snow-shoes to take horses for four days; at Fort Jasper they were to enter skiffs, to go to Fort Assiniboin, on the river Athabasca. There they would take horse again for Fort Edmonton or Augustus, on the Saskatchewan. They descend this river, which runs into Lake Winnipeg, traverse the lake, and finally follow the Nelson river to its mouth, the end of their long annual journey across the American continent. For myself, I had to try the snow-shoes for the first time in my life; by means of them, I had to ascend those frightful ramparts, the barriers of snow, which separate the Atlantic world from the Pacific Ocean and the waters of the Arctic. I have in my previous letters already told you that this is probably the most elevated point of the Rocky Mountains, where five great rivers derive their sources, viz.: the north branch of the Saskatchewan, flowing into Lake Winnipeg, the Athabasca and Peace rivers, uniting and flowing into Great Slave lake, which is discharged into the Northern ocean, by the Mackenzie, the most solitary of rivers. From the bosom of these mountains the Columbia and Frazer rivers also derive water from a thousand fountains and streams.

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[9] "Two commissioners, Warre and Vavasour, were sent out in 1845 by the Hudson Bay Company to examine into McLoughlin's policy and proceedings, and the state of the country generally. They dispatched their report without showing it to McLoughlin, which hurt his feelings greatly, implying as it did that his conduct had been unfavorably criticised by the commissioners."—*Bancroft.*

We had now seventy miles to travel on snow-shoes, in order to reach the boat encampment on the banks of the Columbia. We proposed to accomplish this in two days and a half. The most worthy and excellent Messrs. Rowand and Harriote, whose kindness at the Rocky Mountain House and Fort Augustus I shall ever acknowledge, were of opinion that it was absolutely impossible for me to accomplish the journey, on account of my corpulency, and they wished to dissuade me from attempting it. However, I thought I could remedy the inconvenience of my surplus weight by a vigorous fast of thirty days, which I cheerfully underwent. I found myself much lighter indeed, and started off somewhat encouraged, over snow sixteen feet deep. We went in single file — alternately ascending and descending — sometimes across plains piled up with avalanches — sometimes over lakes and rapids buried deeply under the snow — now on the side of a deep mountain — then across a forest of cypress tress, of which we could only see the tops. I cannot tell you the number of my summersets. I continually found myself embarrassed by my snow-shoes, or entangled in some branch of a tree. When falling, I spread my arms before me, as one naturally would do, to break the violence of the fall; and upon deep snow the danger is not great — though I was often half buried, when I required the assistance of my companions, which was always tendered with great kindness and good humor.

We made thirty miles the first day, and then made preparations to encamp. Some pine trees were cut down and stripped of their branches, and these being laid on the snow furnished us with a bed, whilst a fire was lighted on a floor of green logs. To sleep thus — under the beautiful canopy of the starry heavens — in the midst of lofty and steep mountains — among sweet murmuring rills and roaring torrents — may appear strange to you, and to all lovers of rooms, rendered comfortable by stoves and feathers; but you may think differently after having come and breathed the pure air of the mountains, where in return coughs and colds are unknown. Come and make the trial, and you will say that it is easy to forget the fatigues of a long march, and find contentment and joy even upon the spread branches of pines, on which, after the Indian fashion, we extended ourselves and slept, wrapped up in buffalo robes.

The next morning we commenced the descent of what is called the Great Western Slope.[10] This took us five hours. The whole slope is covered with gigantic cedars and with pine trees of different species. Woe to the man who happens to have a heavy body or to make a false step. I say this from experience; for many times I found myself twenty or thirty feet from the point of my departure — happy indeed if, in the fall, I did not violently strike my head against the trunk of some great tree.

At the foot of the mountain an obstacle of a new kind presented itself. All the barriers of snow, the innumerable banks, which had stopped the water of the streams, lakes and torrents, were broken up during the night, and swelled considerably the Great Portage river, which is scarce more than a mile wide, and it meanders so remarkably in this straight valley, down which we traveled for a day and a half, that we were compelled to cross the said river not less than forty times, with the water frequently up to our shoulders. So great is its impetuosity, that we were obliged mutually to support ourselves to prevent being carried away by the current. We marched in our wet clothes during the rest of our sad route. The long soaking, joined to my great fatigue, swelled my limbs. All the nails of my feet came off, and the blood stained my moccasins or Indian shoes. Four times I found my strength gone, and I should certainly have perished in that frightful region if the courage and strength of my companions had not roused and aided me in my distress.

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[10] Fr. La Grande Côte de l'Ouest.

We saw "May-poles" all along the old encampments of the Portage. Each traveler who passes there for the first time selects his own. A young Canadian, with much kindness, dedicated one to me which was at least 120 feet in height, and which reared its lofty head above all the neighboring trees. Did I deserve it? He stripped it of all its branches, only leaving at the top a little crown; at the bottom my name and the date of the transit were written.

Moose, reindeer and mountain goats are frequently found in this region.

We left at last the valley of the Portage and passed through a thick and mountainous forest, where hoary pines lay prostrate by thousands — and where many a giant tree, in its full vigor, had been leveled to the ground by the raging tempest. On issuing from the forest, an extensive marsh presented itself, through which we had to plod, up to the knees in mud and water; this trouble was trifling compared to the past, and we were still more encouraged at the sight of a beautiful and verdant plain, where four reindeer were seen carousing, bouncing and jumping in the midst of plenty. No doubt they, as well as ourselves, had issued forth from the snowy and icy cliffs, and felt light-hearted and joyful at the delightful prospect of mountain and plain at this season of the year. On approaching, a dozen guns were at once leveled against the innocent and timid creatures. I was pleased to observe, by the wonderful rapidity with which they used their legs, that no one had injured their noble and beautiful frames.

On the 10th, toward the middle of the day, we arrived at the Boat Encampment, on the bank of the Columbia, at the mouth of the Portage river. Those who have passed the Rocky Mountains at 53° of north latitude, during the great melting of the snows, know whether or not we merit the title of good travelers. It required all my strength to accomplish it, and I confess that I would not dare undertake it again.

After so many labors and dangers, we deserved a repast. Happily, we found at the encampment all the ingredients that were necessary for a feast — a bag of flour, a large ham, part of a reindeer, butter, cheese, sugar, and tea in abundance, which the gentlemen of the English brigade had charitably left behind. While some were employed calking and refitting the barge, others prepared the dinner; and in about an hour we found ourselves snugly seated and stretched out around the kettles and roasts, laughing and joking about the summersets on the mountains and the accidents on the Portage. I need not tell you that they described me as the most clumsy and awkward traveler in the band.

Three beautiful rivers unite at this place: the Columbia, coming from the southeast — the Portage river, from the northeast, and the Canoe river from the northwest. We were surrounded by a great number of magnificent mountains, covered with perpetual snow, and rising from twelve to sixteen thousand feet above the level of the ocean. The Hooker and the Brown are the highest, the latter measuring 16,000 feet.

Very Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:[11]

The Columbia at the Boat Encampment is 3,600 feet above the level of the sea. Having finished our meal, we launched the barge and rapidly descended the river, which was now swollen many feet above its usual level. Did not more serious avocations call him away, an admirer of nature would willingly linger in a region like this. The volcanic and basaltic islands — the range of picturesque mountains, whose bases came to bathe in the river, whilst their summits seemed to be struggling, in the giant efforts of the avalanche, to throw off the winding-sheet of winter, in order to give place to the new and beautiful verdure of the month of May, with its smiling and varied flowers — the thousand fountains which we could at one view behold, leaping out with soothing music from the shelves of perpendicular rocks bordering the river — all lent their aid to increase the beauty of the scenery of nature, which, in this region of the Columbia, seems to have put forth all her energy to display her grandeur and magnificence.

After some hours of descent we came to Martin's rapid, where a Canadian so called, together with his son, found a watery grave. Its roar is deafening, and the agitation of the water resembles that of a raging sea-storm. The whole bed of the river is here strewed with immense fragments of rocks. Guided by an expert Iroquois pilot, and aided with ten oars, the boat darted over the Great Rapids of the Columbia, dancing and leaping from wave to wave, with the rapidity of lightning.

At sunset we were at the Dalles[12] of the Dead. Here, in 1838, twelve unfortunate voyageurs were swallowed up in the river. For about two miles the waters are compressed between a range of perpendicular rocks, presenting innumerable crags, fissures and cliffs, through which the Columbia leaps with irresistible impetuosity, forming as it dashes along frightful whirlpools, where every passing object is swallowed and disappears. By means of two long ropes we dropped down our boat through the Dalle, and encamped for the night at its outlet.

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[11] Dated St. Paul's Station, near Colville, May 29, 1846.

[12] *Dalle* is an old French word, meaning a trough, and the name is given by the Canadian voyageurs to all contracted running waters, hemmed in by walls of rock.—*Author's Note.*

On the 11th we continued our route at early dawn — the mountain scenery was hidden from our view, wrapped up in dense mist and fog, which were seen ascending in dense pillars, adding to the forming clouds above till the whole sky was overcast. Occasionally, as if to break upon the unusual monotony, would a fallow or reindeer be observed on the margin of the stream, or peeping with uplifted ears from a thicket, as the strange sound of oars or the Canadian song came stealing louder and louder upon them in their quiet abode — off they bounded, affrighted at the sight of men, so hateful, it appears, to the wild and timid creatures of the forest. In the course of this day we ran the place called the Little Dalles, and in the evening we encamped at the entrance of the Upper Lake.

This beautiful sheet of crystalline water, whilst the rising sun was tinting the tops of a thousand hills around, was most refreshing to the eye. It is about thirty miles long by four or five wide. Its borders are embellished by overhanging precipices and majestic peaks, which, rearing their white heads above the clouds, look down like venerable monarchs of the desert upon the great forests of pines and cedar surrounding the lake. The two highest peaks are called St. Peter and St. Paul.

Twenty Indian families, belonging to the station of St. Peter, were found encamped on the borders of the lake. I gladly accepted their invitation to visit them. It was the meeting of a father with his children, after ten months of absence and dangers. I dare say the joy was mutually sincere. The greater part of their tribe had been converted during the past year, at Kettle Falls. These families were absent at that time. I passed, therefore, several days among them, to instruct them in the duties and practices of religion.

They then received baptism, with all the marks of sincere piety and gratitude. Gregory, their chief, who had not ceased to exhort his people by word and example, had the happiness to receive baptism in 1838 from the hands of the Reverend Mr., now Archbishop, Blanchet. The worthy and respectable chief was now at the height of his joy, in seeing at last all his children brought under the standard of Jesus Christ. The tribe of these Lake Indians are a part of the Kettle Fall nation. They are very poor and subsist principally on fish and wild roots. As soon as we shall have more means at our disposal, we will supply them with implements of husbandry and with various seeds and roots, which I have no doubt will thrive well in their country; this will be a great assistance to these destitute people.

The second lake is about six miles distant from the first. It is of about the same length, but less wide. We passed under a perpendicular rock, where we beheld an innumerable number of arrows sticking out of the fissures. The Indians, when they ascend the lake, have a custom of lodging each an arrow into these crevices. The origin and cause of the custom is unknown to me. This is the reason why the first voyageurs called these lakes the Arrow lakes.

The mouth of the river McGilvray or Flatbow is near the outlet of the Lower Lake. It presents a beautiful situation for the establishment of a future reduction or mission, and I have already marked out a site for the construction of a church. About twenty miles lower, we passed the Flathead or Clark's river, which contributes largely to the Columbia. These two beautiful rivers derive a great portion of their waters from the same chain of the Rocky Mountains, from which a great number of the forks of the south branch of the Saskatchewan and of the Missouri are supplied. For a distance of about thirty miles from their junction with the Columbia are they obstructed by insurmountable falls and rapids. Among the many lakes connected with the Flathead river, three are very conspicuous, and measure from thirty to forty miles in length and from four to six in width. Flathead lake receives a broad and beautiful stream, extending upward of 100 miles in a northwestern direction, through a most delightful valley, and is supplied by considerable torrents, coming from a great cluster of mountains connected immediately with the main chain, in which a great number of lakes lie imbedded. Clark's Fork or Flathead river passes through Pend d'Oreille lake. Lake Roothaan [Priest lake] is situated in the Pend d'Oreille and Flatbow mountains, and discharges itself by the Black-gown river [Priest river] into the Clark, twenty miles below the Kalispel lake. These three lovely lakes are covered with islands. The St. Mary's, or Bitter Root river, from the southeast, is the greatest tributary of Clark's Fork and the chief residence of the Flatheads. All these waters contain an abundance of fish, especially trout. The geography of the head of Clark's Fork is little known, as appears from the maps, the southeast branch, or the St. Mary's river, being only a small tributary compared to the main stream, coming from the northwest, and passing through the great Flathead lake.

Our barge was in great danger in the Dalles, some miles above Colville. I had left it, to go on foot, to avoid the dangerous passage. The young boatmen, notwithstanding my remonstrances, thought they could pass in safety. A whirlpool suddenly arrested their course and threatened to bury them beneath its angry waters. Their redoubled efforts proved ineffectual — I saw them borne on with an irresistible force to the engulfing centre — the bow of the boat descended already into the abyss and filled! I was on my knees upon the rock which overhung this frightful spectacle, surrounded by several Indians — we implored the aid of heaven in favor of our poor comrades — they seemed to be evidently lost — when the whirlpool filled, and threw them from its bosom, as if reluctantly yielding up the prey which it had so tenaciously held. We all gave heartfelt thanks to Almighty God for having delivered them from a danger so imminent.

From the outlet of the Lower Lake of the Columbia to Fort Colville, the aspect of the country is highly picturesque and interesting. The whole section, on both sides of the river, is well supplied with rivulets and streams. The soil is rather light, but it affords fine grazing; the mountains are not high — the forests are open — the bottom lands present here and there beautiful groves — the surface of the soil yields an abundant and luxuriant grass. The Guyelpitoeg or Sioushwaps [Kettle] river comes in from the west in sight of Fort Colville.

Toward the end of the month of May I arrived at Fort Colville. I found the nation of Skoyelpi or Kettle Falls already baptized by the Reverend Father Hoeken, who had continued to instruct them after my departure in the month of August of last year. They had built, to my great surprise, a small frame church, so much the more beautiful and agreeable to my eyes, as being their first attempt at architecture, and the exclusive work of the Indians. With a laudable pride they conducted me, as in triumph, to the humble and new temple of the Lord, and in favor of that good people, and for their perseverance in the faith, I there offered the august sacrifice of the altar.

The arrival of the good Father Nobili at Colville filled us with great joy and consolation. He had made missionary excursions over the greatest portion of New Caledonia. Everywhere the Indian tribes received him with open arms, and took great care to bring their little children to be baptized. Having made a retreat of eight days in the Reduction of St. Ignatius, and after a month of repose and preparation for a second expedition, he returned with renewed zeal and fervor to his dear Caledonians, accompanied by several laborers, and supplied with a dozen horses, loaded with implements of agriculture and carpentry.

As a token of my sincere gratitude, and to let you know that we have friends and benefactors in Oregon, I must here state to your Reverence that Father Nobili and myself were most hospitably entertained during our stay at Fort Colville. The kindness of the Honorable Mr. Lewes[13] and family I shall never forget. The attention shown Father Nobili in the trading posts of New Caledonia is beyond all praise. Truly and deservedly has Commodore Wilkes stated "that the liberality and hospitality of all the gentlemen of the Honorable Hudson Bay Company are proverbial." Indeed, we experience this and participate of it on all occasions.

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[13] John Lee Lewes, first with the Northwest Company in charge of the Hudson Bay Company's post on Mackenzie river, and afterward at Fort Colville; called by Bancroft "the fop of the Columbia district." He retired from the service in the course of the present year and went to Australia with the intention of settling, but preferred to return to the fur country, and ended his days on Red river.

CHAPTER VI.[1]

AMONG THE MISSIONS.

Proceeds to Fort Vancouver — Progress of mission work — Starts out again in July — Painful accident — Scenery of the Columbia — Wretchedness of natives — Old clothes and old fish — The Spokan plain again — Forty little lakes — Father Hoeken at St. Ignatius — Through the woods — The relish of life in the open air — Something about "medicine" — A magnificent view — St. Mary's on the Bitter Root.

Very Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:[2]

I ACCEPTED the kind offer of Mr. Lewes, and took my seat in one of the barges of the Hudson Bay Company brigade, on its way to Fort Vancouver. We stopped at Fort Okinagan,[3] where I administered baptism to forty-three persons, chiefly children. Our passage was very pleasant and agreeable. I have little to add to what I have already stated in my preceding letters of last year respecting our residence at Saint Francis Xavier and the other Catholic establishments in the Willamette valley and vicinity. St. James' Church at Vancouver, St. John's in Oregon City, St. Mary's at the Convent, and St. Francis Xavier's chapel have all been opened for divine service. The new church among the Canadians of Grand Prairie, and the Cathedral of St. Paul, were fast progressing. The number of children in the Sisters' school had greatly increased, and a change for the better already taken place among the little half-breed girls confided to their care. Sister Loyola, the Superior, appeared delighted with their present conduct. Two Protestant families, among the most respectable in Oregon, Dr. Long and lady and Judge Burnet and family, were received into the bosom of the Catholic Church in Oregon City. Archbishop Blanchet and companions were anxiously expected; may the Lord speed them, and grant them a happy passage on the boisterous ocean — a route which, it appears, they have selected in order to reach their destined new homes. Oh, how large is the vineyard!— the Island of Vancouver alone contains upward of 20,000 Indians, ready to receive our missionaries — it has just been made a bishopric, and the Reverend Mr. Demers appointed to it — and an extensive field awaits the laborers, among the numerous nations of the northwest coast. The visits paid to these various tribes, by the Black-gowns, and the affection and kindness with which they are received by the Indians, leave little doubt of the ultimate success of their holy enterprise.

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[1] This chapter follows the English text of the *Oregon Missions*, and comprises Letters XIX, XXI and part of XX of that work (Letters XVIII, XIX and part of XXII *Missions de l'Oregon*), published as letters to the Provincial of Missouri, Reverend J. O. Van de Velde, and dated as by notes inserted at the proper points.

[2] Letter dated Fort Walla Walla, July 18, 1846.

[3] The trading-post at the mouth of the Okinagan river, established in 1811 by David Stuart, one of the Astorians who came in the Tonquin. Abandoned about 1862.

In order to return to the upper missions, I started in the beginning of July [1846] from Fort Vancouver,[4] two days after the brigade of the Hudson Bay Company had left it. An accident, fortunately not attended with serious consequences, here occurred to me. A powder-horn exploded near me accidentally, scorching me severely and completely stripping the skin from my nose, cheeks and lips — leaving me to all appearances, after all my travels, a raw-faced mountaineer. I procured an Indian canoe, well manned, and soon found myself during a thunder-storm in the great gap of the Cascade Mountains, through which the mighty Columbia winds its way. The sublime and the romantic appear to have made a grand effort for a magnificent display in this spot. On both sides of the stream perpendicular walls of rock rise in majestic boldness — small rills and rivulets, innumerable crystalline streams pursue their way; murmuring down on the steep declivities, they rush and leap from cascade to cascade, after a thousand gambols, adding at last their foaming tribute to the turbulent and powerful stream. The imposing mass of waters has here forced its way between a chain of volcanic towering mountains, advancing headlong with an irresistible impetuosity over rocky reefs and prostrate ruins, for a distance of about four miles; forming the dangerous, and indeed the last remarkable obstruction — the Grand Cascades of the Columbia. There is an interesting and very plausible Indian account of the formation of these far-famed cascades, on which so much has been said and written, so many conjectures regarding earth-slides, sinks or swells, caused by subterraneous volcanic reagents. "Our grandfathers," said an Indian to me, "remember the time when the waters passed here quietly and without obstruction, under a long range of towering and projecting rocks, which, unable to bear their weight any longer, crumbled down, thus stopping up and raising the bed of the river; then it overflowed the great forests of cedar and pine, which are still to be seen above the cascades." Indeed, the traveler beholds with astonishment a great number of huge trunks of trees, still standing upright in water about twenty feet deep. No person, in my opinion, can form a just idea of the cause that produced these remarkable changes, without admitting the Indian narrative.

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[4] Fort Vancouver is the Hudson Bay Company's principal post west of the Rocky Mountains. It receives all the furs from the interior of the country and furnishes the supplies for the various posts. The company has the following establishments on the Columbia river: Forts Vancouver, George, Walla Walla, Okinagan, Colville, Boisée, Hall; on Frazer river and its branches, Forts Langley, Thompson, Alexandria, Chilcotin, Frazer, St. James, McLeod, Babine; along the northwest coast, Stickeen, Simpson, McLoughlin, Nisqually, Cowlitz, and Umpqua. —*Author's Note, French ed.*

My baggage was soon conveyed to the upper end of the portage. The distance from the cascades to the dalles is about forty-five miles, and is without any obstacle. The mountain scenery on both sides of the river, with its clusters of shrubs, cedars and pines, is truly delightful, heightened occasionally by the sight of the snow-capped Mounts Hood and St. Helens. A favorable breeze made us unfurl two blankets by way of sails, and as we were gliding rapidly up the stream we observed several islands of volcanic formation, where the Indians deposit their dead on scaffolds, or in little huts made of pieces of split cedar, frequently covered with mats and boards; great care is taken to hinder birds of prey, or the rapacious wolves, with their hyena stomachs and plundering propensities, from breaking in upon the abode of the dead.

The third day we arrived at the Great Dalles. Indians flock thither from different quarters of the interior, to attend, at this season of the year, to the salmon fisheries. This is their glorious time for rejoicing, gambling and feasting; the long lent is passed; they have at last assembled in the midst of abundance — all that the eye can see, or the nose smell, is fish, and nothing but fish. Piles of them are lying everywhere on the rocks, the Indian huts abound with them, and the dogs are dragging and fighting over the offal in all directions. Not less than 800 Indians were present on this occasion.

One who has seen them five years ago, poor and almost naked, and who beholds them now, discovers with a peculiar feeling of humor and delight the entire change in their external appearance, a complete metamorphosis, as Ovid would say. Their dresses are of the most grotesque character, regardless alike of their appropriateness to sex or condition of life. A masquerade character, as we understand it, will at least exhibit unity of design; but this Indian masquerade sets all unities at defiance. A stout, swarthy Indian steps proudly by you, apparently conscious of the dignity conferred on him by his new acquisitions — a roundabout much too small for him, a pair of tights with straps, with an intervening space showing the absence of linen, form his body dress, while an old-fashioned lady's night-cap with large frills, and if he be rich enough, a sailor's glazed cap carefully balanced above it, constitute his head-dress; a pair, and sometimes half a pair of brogans, complete the ludicrous appearance of this Indian dandy. Some appear parading through the camp in the full dress of a wagoner, others in a mixture composed of the sailor's, the wagoner's and the lawyer's, arranged according to fancy; but the favorite article of ornamental dress appears to be the night-cap with its large frills; some again with only one article of dress. I have seen an old Indian showing off a pair of boots to the best advantage, as they formed the only article of his wardrobe then on his person. Indian squaws are seen attired in long calico gowns, little improved by the copious addition of fish oil, with which the taste or negligence of the present owners besmeared them; occasionally, if they can afford it, to this is superadded a vest, a flannel or great-coat.

The dalles at present form a kind of masquerading thoroughfare, where emigrants and Indians meet, it appears, for the purpose of affording mutual aid. When the Oregon emigrants arrive here, they are generally in want of provisions, horses, canoes, and guides — these wants the Indians supply, receiving in exchange the old traveling clothes of the doctors, lawyers, farmers, Germans, Frenchmen, Spaniards, etc., that pass through the dalles on their westward route. Hence the motley collection of pants [*sic*], coats, boots of every form and size, comforters, caps and hats of every fashion.

Here I overtook Messrs. Lewes and Manson,[8] who kindly offered me a place in one of the barges of the company, which I gladly accepted. The transportation of their boats and goods had taken up a whole day. From the Great Dalles to the upper sources of the Columbia much care and attention are required in its navigation, for it presents a constant succession of rapids, falls, cascades and dalles. Men of great experience are here employed as pilots, and notwithstanding their skill and precaution no river probably on the globe, frequented as little, could tell of more disastrous accidents.

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[8] Donald Manson, in the Hudson Bay Company service as early as 1818; retired about 1854 and settled at Champoeg.

At the dalles you enter a barren region, where driftwood is brought into every encampment by the Indians, for which they gladly receive a piece of tobacco in return. In the absence of the savages, the tombs of the dead are sometimes shamefully pillaged by civilized Christian travelers, taking away the very boards that cover the dead bodies, and thus leaving them the prey of vultures and crows.

Indians linger on the Columbia as long as a salmon can be caught. Careless of the approaching winter, they do not lay in sufficient stock of provisions, and till late in the fall they may be seen picking up the dead and dying fishes which float in great numbers on the surface. In the immediate neighborhood of a camp the air is infected with the scent of salmon in a state of putrefaction; they are suspended on trees or on scaffolds, and to this unwholesome and detestable food has the improvident Indian recourse, when the days of his long lent commence.

You can scarcely form an idea of the deplorable condition of the poor petty tribes, scattered along the banks of the Columbia, of which the numbers visibly diminish from year to year. Imagine their dwellings, a few poor huts, constructed of rush, bark, bushes, or of pine branches, sometimes covered with skins or rags — around these miserable habitations lie scattered in profusion the bones of animals, and the offal of fishes of every tribe, amidst accumulated filth of every description. In the interior, you find roots piled up in a corner, skins hanging from cross-poles, and fish smoking over the fire, a few dying embers; an axe to cut wood being seldom found among them. The whole stock of kitchen utensils, drinking vessels, dishes, etc., are comprised in something like a fish-kettle, made of osier, and besmeared with gum — to boil this kettle stones are heated red hot and thrown into it. But the mess cooked in this way, can you guess what it is? No, not in twenty trials — it is impossible to divine what the ingredients are that compose this outlandish soup!

But to pass from the material to the personal; what strange figures! faces thickly covered with grease and dirt — heads that have never felt a comb — hands! but such hands! a veritable pair of "jack of all trades," fulfilling in rapid succession the varied functions of the comb, the pocket-handkerchief, the knife, fork and spoon — while eating, the process is loudly indicated by the crackling and discordant sounds that issue from the nose, mouth, throat, etc., a sight the bare recollection of which is enough to sicken any person. Thus you can form some idea of their personal miseries — miseries, alas! that faintly image another species infinitely more saddening; for what shall I say in attempting to describe their moral condition? There prevails among the greater part of them a kind of superstitious idolatry, (called medicine or juggling) that pays homage to the vilest animals, and even goes as far as human sacrifice. In the course of the last summer and almost before the faces of the Protestant ministers, a child was devoted to the *manes* of one of its companions, who died the day before. The victim was tied so cruelly that the cords entered its flesh, and exposed upon the rocks, where it would soon have perished had not a Mr. Perkins,[6] a humane man, succeeded, though with difficulty, in ransoming it. There is among them a degeneracy of morals which knows no stronger tie in conjugal obligations than the caprice of the moment — a vehement, inordinate passion for gambling, that is prolonged to the time of repose — a laziness which nothing can induce them to shake off but the love of play, or the pressing claim of hunger — they are, in fine, addicted to the vilest habits of gluttony, dissimulation, etc. Such is the wretched condition of the poor savage tribes along the Columbia. But amidst all this misery, there is fortunately one redeeming feature, a constant desire to discover some power superior to man;

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[6] Perhaps the Methodist missionary; see note, page 455.

this disposition renders them attentive to the least word that seems to convey the slightest knowledge of a Supreme Being, and hence the facility with which they believe anything that at all resembles the Word of God.

Very Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:[7]

The eighth day after my departure from Fort Vancouver, I landed safely at Walla Walla, with the goods destined for the different missions. In a few days all was ready, and having thanked the good and kind-hearted Mr. McBride,[8] the superintendent of the fort, who had rendered me every assistance in his power, we soon found ourselves on the way to the mountains leading a band of pack mules and horses over a sandy dry plain, covered with bunch grass and wormwood. We made about sixteen miles without wood or water, and encamped for the night in a beautiful little meadow, watered by the Walla Walla river, where we found abundance of grass for our animals — these were soon unloaded and left free to graze at leisure; we next made a fire, put on the camp-kettle, stretched the bed, consisting of a buffalo-robe, and smoked together the friendly Indian pipe, whilst supper was preparing. We found ourselves at home and perfectly at ease in less than a quarter of an hour. The evening was clear and beautiful — not a cloud — our sleep, sound and refreshing, prepared us for an early start at dawn of day. We had a hot day's march, with pack animals, again without wood or water, over an undulating plain, before we could reach the crossing of the Nez Percés or Lewis Fork, whose source is in the angle of the Rocky and Snowy Mountains, between the forty-second and forty-fourth degrees, near the sources of the Rio Colorado, [Green River] the Platte, the Yellowstone, and the Missouri rivers. Its western course till it reaches the Blue Mountains, and hence its northern direction till it joins the Columbia, together with its principal tributaries, are sufficiently known to you and have been amply described already.

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[7] Dated St. Ignatius, near the Kalispel Bay, July 26, 1846; dated in French edition, July 17, 1847.

[8] Probably William McBean, who succeeded Archibald McKinlay at Walla Walla. Being a Catholic, he was the subject of serious and doubtless totally unfounded charges at the time of the Whitman massacre.

We found about a dozen Indian lodges called the Palooses, a portion of the Sapetan or Nez Percés tribe. We procured from the Indians here some fresh salmon, for which we made them ample return in powder and lead. But as the grass was withered and scanty, and the pilfering disposition of these Indians rather doubtful, we resolved on proceeding eight or ten miles farther, and encamped late in the evening on the Pavilion river. The Nez Percés and Spokan plain is at least a thousand feet elevated above the bed of the river. It is dry, stony, undulating, covered with bunch and nutritious grass, with prickly pear and wormwood. The basaltic and volcanic formations which extend through the whole of this region are really wonderful. We frequently passed ponds and small lakes embedded between walls of basaltic rocks — immense ranges of dark shining pentagonal pillars, as if forced from the bosom of the plain, extend for some miles, resembling not unfrequently forts and ancient ruined cities and castles. We encamped several times near small but beautiful lakes, where ducks and geese, with their young broods, were swimming in great numbers. The Indians frequent these regions in search of the bitter and camas roots, very abundant here. In every one of their old encampments we observed great quantities of prairie-turtle shells, a proof of their being numerous and serving as food for the savages. Pheasants or quails were very abundant — we daily killed what we wanted for our meals.

On the fifth day of our departure from Walla Walla, we reached the Spokan river, and found a good fording for our animals. You will see with pleasure the chart I have made of the headwaters of this river, which, though beautiful and interesting, is yet, like all the other rivers in Oregon, almost an unbroken succession of rapids, falls and cascades, and of course ill-adapted in its present condition to the purposes of navigation. The two upper valleys of the Cœur d'Alène are beautiful, and of a rich mould; they are watered by two deep forks, running into the Cœur d'Alène lake, a fine sheet of water of about thirty miles in length by four or five broad, from which the river Spokan derives its source. I called the two upper forks the St. Joseph's and the St. Ignatius. They are formed by innumerable torrents descending from the Cœur d'Alène Mountains, a chain of the Rocky Mountains. The two upper valleys are about sixty or eighty miles long, and four or eight miles broad. I counted upward of forty little lakes in them. The whole neighborhood of the Spokan river affords very abundant grazing, and in many sections is tolerably well timbered with pines of different species.

On leaving the river we ascended by a steep Indian path. A few miles' ride across a pine forest brings you to a beautiful valley, leading to Colville, agreeably diversified by plains and forests, hememed in by high wooded mountains, and by huge picturesque rocks towering their lofty heads over all the rest. Fountains and rivulets are here very numerous. After about thirty miles we arrived at the foot of the Kalispel mountain, in the neighborhood of St. Francis Regis, where already about seventy metis or half-breeds have collected to settle permanently. Several of them accompanied me across the mountain, the height of which is about 5,000 feet above the level of the plain. Its access is very easy on the western side; on the eastern, the narrow path winds its snake-like course through a steep and dense forest. After a march of about eight hours we arrived at the beautiful Kalispel Bay, on the margin of Lake De Boey, almost in sight of the Reduction of St. Ignatius.—My letter to Mrs. Parmentier,* which I insert here, will make you acquainted with the whole history of that mission.

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* See p. 457.

Very Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:[10]

On the 27th of July, [1846] I bade farewell to Father Hoeken and his interesting little flock, consisting of about 500 Indians. I was accompanied by two Kalispels and some of the Cœur d'Alènes, who came to meet me. We had beautiful weather, and a path remarkably free from those obstructions so annoying to travelers in the mountains. Toward the middle of our day's journey, we reached a beautiful lake surrounded by hills, and a thick forest of larch. I have named it Lake de Nef, as a token of gratitude toward an illustrious Belgian, one of the greatest benefactors of the mission. It discharges itself through a narrow passage, forming a beautiful rapid, called the Tournhout-torrent, at the termination of which it joins its limpid waters to those of the river Spokan.

Next day the sun rose majestically, and everything gave promise of an agreeable day, but these fine appearances were gradually lost behind a thick bank of ominous reddish clouds, which, shortly after overspreading the sky, poured down such torrents of rain that everything on us was drenched as completely as if we had waded through a river. At the foot of the Great Rapids, we crossed the river Spokan, and continued our route over an extensive plain agreeably interspersed with thick groves of larch and pine, when toward sunset we encamped close by a refreshing fountain.

A few words descriptive of our encampments during wet weather may not be out of place. The tent erected in haste — saddles, bridles, baggage, etc., thrown into some sheltered spot — large heaps of larch branches or brushwood are cut down, and spread over the spot of ground destined for our repose — provision of as much dry wood as can be collected is now brought forth for the whole night; on this occasion we made a fire large enough to roast an ox. These preparations completed, our meal (dinner and supper the same time), consisting of flour, camas roots, and some buffalo tallow, called *dépouille* by the Canadian mountaineers, is thrown into a large kettle nearly filled with water. The great heat obliging the cook to stand at a respectable distance from the fire, a long pole serves as a ladle to stir about the contents until the mixture has acquired the proper density, when a vigorous attack is made upon it after a singular fashion indeed. On the present occasion we were six in number, trusting to a single spoon, but necessity soon supplied the deficiency. Two of the company used pieces of bark; two others, scraps of leather; and the fifth a small turtle-shell. Grace being said, a circle is formed round the kettle, and the instruments plunge and replunge into it with as much regularity and address as a number of smiths' hammers plying at the anvils — a few moments, and the contents of the large kettle are gone, leaving not a vestige behind. We found this repast delicious, thanks to our keen appetites. Making due allowance for the tastes of others, *"de gustibus enim nil disputandum,"* I confess I have never enjoyed a feast more heartily than such as I have now described, prepared in the open air, after the Indian fashion. All the refined inventions of the art culinary, as sauces, pickles, preserves, pies, etc., designed to quicken or restore weak appetites, are here utterly useless. Loss of appetite, which among the wealthy forms the reigning complaint, furnishing abundant employment to apothecaries and doctors, is here unheard of. If these patients would have the courage to abandon for a time their high living and traverse the wilds of this region on horseback, breakfasting at daybreak and dining at sunset, after a ride of forty miles, I venture to predict that they will not need any refined incitements to relish as I did a simple dish prepared by the Indians.

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[10] Letter dated Valley of St. Mary's, August 8, 1846.

Having dried our blankets and said night prayers, our repose was not the less sound for having fared so simply, or lain upon a rough couch of brushwood. We started early the next morning, and about mid-day arrived at the

Mission of the Sacred Heart, where I was received with the greatest cordiality by Fathers Joset and Point, with Brothers Magri and Lyons. All the Cœur d'Alènes of the neighborhood came to welcome me. The fervor and piety of these poor Indians filled me with great joy and consolation, especially when I considered how great the change wrought in them since their conversion to Christanity. The details of this conversion have, I believe, been published by Father Point, and, by the way, I may remark here that some incidents connected with my previous mission to this country are inserted in this letter. To these details I may add that these Indians, previous to their conversion, were notorious among the other tribes, on account, it is said, of their great power in juggling and other idolatrous practices. Indeed, they were addicted to superstitions the most absurd, blindly offering adoration to the vilest beasts and the most common objects. Now, they are the first to scoff at these ridiculous practices, adding at the same time, with much feeling and veneration, "God has had pity on us — he has opened our eyes — he is infinitely good to us." A single instance will serve to give you some idea of the objects of their worship and the facility with which they adopt their manitous or divinities. They related to me that the first white man they saw in their country wore a calico shirt, spotted all over with black and white, which to them appeared like the smallpox; he also wore a white coverlet. The Cœur d'Alènes imagined that the spotted shirt was the great manitou himself — the great master of that alarming disease, the smallpox — and that the white coverlet was the great manitou of the snow; that if they could obtain possession of these, and pay them divine honors, their nation would never afterward be visited by that dreadful scourge; and their winter hunts be rendered successful by an abundant fall of snow. They accordingly offered him in exchange for these several of their best horses. The bargain was eagerly closed by the white man. The spotted shirt and the white coverlet became thenceforward objects of great veneration for many years. On grand solemnities, the two manitous were carried in procession to a lofty eminence, usually consecrated to the performance of their superstitious rites. They were then respectfully spread on the grass: the great medicine-pipe offered to them, with as much veneration as is customary with the Indians in presenting it to the sun, the fire, the earth and the water. The whole band of jugglers, or medicine-men, then entoned canticles of adoration to them. The service was generally terminated with a grand medicine dance, in which the performers exhibited the most hideous contortions and extravagant gestures, accompanied with a most unearthly howling.

The term *medicine* is commonly employed by the whites to express whatever regards the juggling, idolatrous practices of the savages; probably because the Indian, feeling his ignorance of the proper remedies in sickness, and almost wholly dependent upon chance for his subsistence, merely demands of his manitous some relief in these distressing situations. This something that the Indians call Power, is at times limited, say they, to the procuring of only one object, as the cure of some disease. Some other Power, again, is not so limited, it extends to many objects, as success in hunting, fishing, waging war and avenging injuries. All this, however, varies according to the degree of confidence reposed in it by the individual, the number of his passions or the intensity of his malice. Some of the Powers are looked upon, even by the savages themselves, as wicked in the extreme; the sole object of such Powers is to do evil. Moreover it is not at all times granted, even when those professing to be most powerful medicine-men earnestly desire it. It comes only during sleep, in a fainting fit, during a loud clap of thunder, or in the delirious excitement of some passion; but never without some definite purpose, as to foment dissensions, or exasperate to deeds of violence, or to obtain some corporal advantage; favors which are always purchased at the expense of the soul. Much exaggeration is, of course, clearly characteristic of those misnamed effects of preternatural power. Most of those that came under my notice, and which the Indians attributed to preternatural agency, were the effects of causes purely natural. Notwitstanding these deplorable disorders of the soul, it is my greatest consolation to reflect that these superstitious practices, in consequence of the many palpable contradictions they admit, become a spiritual malady the least difficult to cure.

On the 5th of August, [1846] I left the Mission of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, accompanied by the Reverend Father Point. Three Indian families, desirous of visiting St. Mary's, served us for guides. Our journey for some days lay along the serpentine course of the river St. Ignatius,[11] in the valley of the North. The soil of this valley is for the most part rich, and well adapted to cultivation, but subject to frequent inundations. Grain and potatoes are here cultivated by the Indians with great success. Father Joset, assisted by the savages, has already enclosed and prepared for cultivation a large field, capable of affording sustenance to several Indian families. Our hopes, then, of seeing these poor Indians furnished with a plentiful supply of provisions and their wandering habits thereby checked, will, with the blessing of God, be realized at no very distant day. To attain the desirable object of uniting them in villages, and thus forming them to habits of industry, we need, however, more means than we possess at present — we are very much in want of seeds of various kinds, and of agricultural implements.

Before arriving at the snow-capped chain of mountains, which separates the Cœur d'Alènes from the Flatheads, we wound our way for two days through forests almost impenetrable and over immense beds of rock, always following the course of the river, except where its tortuous windings would lead us too circuitous a route. So tortuous indeed is its course here, that in less than eight hours we crossed it no less than forty-four times. The majestic cedars that

[11] Fr. St. Josse.

shade the gorge at this point are truly prodigious; most of them measure from twenty to thirty feet in circumference, with a proportionate height, and so numerous, that as the rays of the sun cannot penetrate the dense mass, perpetual night may be said, without exaggeration, to reign here. I doubt whether Lebanon can produce any more majestic. The death-like silence of this glen, broken only by the passing breeze, the occasional visit of some wild animal, or the constant murmuring of the rills from the rocky banks, impress the beholder with feelings of a most unearthly yet pleasing nature.

With much difficulty and fatigue we forced a passage through this dense mass of forest, stooping half the time upon the neck of the horse, to avoid the low thorny branches, so thickly crossed together that one is inclined, at first sight, to abandon all hope of wedging his way through them. Its termination brought us to the foot of the great chain of mountains. It occupied us nearly another day to ascend this by a narrow winding path, which is shaded by one of the finest forests in Oregon. Toward sunset we reached the top, where we pitched our camp within a few paces of one of those immense snow masses that perpetually shroud this lofty chain. Here we enjoyed a most magnificent view — the horizon for some hundred miles around presented a spectacle of surpassing grandeur: as far as the eye could reach, a long succession of mountains, towering cliffs and lofty pinnacles, exhibited their dazzling snow-capped summits to our astonished vision. The very silence of this vast wilderness strikes the beholder with feelings of deep sublimity; not even a breeze stirred to break the charm of this enchanting view. I shall never forget the splendor of the scene we witnessed, as the last rays of the setting sun were throwing their full lustre upon the myriads of pinnacles that ranged far away toward the distant horizon.

The descent on the southeastern side of this mountain is less abrupt, presenting slopes of rich verdure, adorned with a great variety of plants and flowers. This descent also occupied us an entire day. We next arrived at a forest, a twin-sister, if I may be allowed the expression, of the one I have just described. Here the river St. Francis Regis meanders through innumerable hoary cedars, pine trees, and an impenetrable thicket of bushes of every species. With the happiest recollections, we finally encamped on the banks of the St. Mary's river, in the Flathead valley — the nursery of our first missionary operations in the Far West.

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CHAPTER VII.[1]

PEACE BETWEEN THE BLACKFEET AND FLATHEADS.

Progress of eighteen months at the mission — Irrigation — Ingenious inventions of Father Mengarini — The medicine of the Black-robes is strong — Crows looking for a fight — Shamefully defeated by Flatheads and Nez Percés — Deeds of arms of boys and women — The celebrated Mary Quille — Blackfeet convinced and bring children for baptism — Grand dance — De Smet's route.

Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:[2]

AFTER an absence of about eighteen months, employed in visiting the various distant tribes and extending among them the kingdom of Christ, I returned to the nursery, so to speak, of our apostolic labors in the Rocky Mountains. Judge of the delight I experienced, when I found the little log church we built five years ago about to be replaced by another, which will bear comparison with those in civilized countries, materials, everything ready to commence erecting it the moment they can procure some ropes to place the heavy timbers on the foundation. Another agreeable surprise, however, yet awaited me; a mill had been constructed, destined to contribute largely to the increasing wants of the surrounding country. It is contrived to discharge the twofold charitable object of feeding the hungry and sheltering the houseless. The flourmill grinds ten or twelve bushels in a day; and the sawmill furnishes an abundant supply of plank, posts, etc., for the public and private building of the nation settled here. Indeed, the location stood much in need of so useful a concern. The soil yields abundant crops of wheat, oats and potatoes — the rich prairie here is capable of supporting thousands of cattle. Two large rivulets, now almost useless, can, with a little labor, be made to irrigate the fields, gardens, and orchards of the village. The stock at present on this farm consists of about forty head of cattle, a fast-increasing herd of hogs and a prolific progeny of domestic fowl. In addition to the mill, twelve frame houses, of regular construction, have been put up. Hence you can form some idea of the temporal advantages enjoyed by the Flatheads of St. Mary's village.

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[1] This chapter follows the English text up to the point noted on page 588, and thereafter the French, which gives a fuller account. It covers Letters XXIII and XXIV, both *Oregon Missions* and *Missions de l'Orégon*, published as letters to the Provincial of Missouri and dated as by footnotes inserted at proper points in the text.

[2] Letter dated Flathead Camp, on the Yellowstone river, September 6, 1846.

St. Mary's, or Bitter Root valley, is one of the finest in the mountains, presenting, throughout its whole extent of about 200 miles, numerous grazing, but few arable tracts of land. Irrigation, either by natural or artificial means, is absolutely necessary to the cultivation of the soil, in consequence of the long summer drought that prevails in this region, commencing in April and ending only in October. This difficulty, however, if the country should be ever thickly settled, can be easily obviated, as the whole region is well supplied with numerous streams and rivulets. These remarks apply to the valleys contiguous to St. Mary's, the general aspect of them differing perhaps but slightly in regard to the heights of the mountains, the colossal dimensions of the rocks, or the vast extent of the plains.

After what has been said in my former letters in relation to religion, little now remains that has a direct reference to it; but you will learn with much pleasure, that the improvements made in the Flathead village afford the missionary stationed there great facilities for prosecuting successfully the grand object of his desires, viz., the eternal happiness of the poor benighted Indian tribes, placed beyond the reach of his immediate influence. The village is now the center of attraction to all the neighboring and many of the distant tribes. The missionary always avails himself of these occasional visits to convey to them the glad tidings of salvation. Among the recent visitors were the head chief of the Snake Indians with his band of warriors; the Bannocks and Nez Percés, conducted by several of their chiefs,— even several bands of Blackfeet; beside these, there were also, on their return from the great hunt, almost the whole tribe of the Pend d'Oreilles, belonging to the station of St. Francis Borgia. These last in particular, the greater part of whom I baptized last year, may be said to rival the zeal of the Flatheads in the practice of their religious duties.

After the festival of Easter, the abundant supply of provisions in the granaries and cellars of the village enabled the minister to invite all the vistors present to a feast, consisting of potatoes, parsnips, turnips, beets, beans. peas and a great variety of meats, of which the greater portion of the guests had never before tasted. Among the industrial products which are mainly owing to the skill and assiduity of their present pastor, Father Mengarini, I must not forget to mention a kind of sugar, extracted from the potato, and a non-intoxicating drink, as pleasant and nutritious as the pale beer of Europe, made from a mixture of barley and native roots.

Let us next turn to the improved condition of the people themselves. Polygamy — or rather a connection, if possible, still more loose — is now, thank God, entirely abolished among our newly-converted Indians; there is, consequently, an evident increase of population. The reckless abandonment of the helpless infant — the capricious discarding of wife and children — the wanton effusion of human blood — are no longer known amongst them. Our feelings are not outraged by the brutal practice, heretofore so commonly witnessed, of a father considering a horse a fair exchange for his daughter; the justice of allowing the young Indian maiden to choose her future partner for life is now universally allowed; — the requisite care of their offspring is regarded in its proper light, as a Christian duty; — attention is paid to the wants of the sick; — changes of treatment, with the remedies administered according to our advice, have probably been the means, under Providence, of rescuing many from premature death. The long-cherished vindictice feelings which so frequently led to depopulating wars, are now supplanted by a Christian sense of justice, which, if unfortunately compelled to take up arms, does so only to repel unjust aggression or defend their inherent rights, but always with the fullest confidence in the protecting arm of heaven.

Indeed their unbounded confidence in the God of battle is well rewarded; a truth which the enemies of the Flatheads invariably acknowledge. "The medicine of the Black-robes," (an expression synonymous with the true religion) "is," say they, "the strongest of all." Did time permit, I could adduce almost innumerable instances to confirm the belief universally entertained here, that Almighty God visibly protects them in the wars they are compelled to wage with the hostile tribes. A few of these, for the authenticity of which I can vouch, may suffice for the present.

In 1840, when threatened by a formidable band of Blackfeet, amounting to nearly 800 warriors, the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles, scarcely numbering sixty, betook themselves to prayer, imploring the aid of heaven, which alone could save them in the unequal contest. Confident of success, they rose from their knees in the presence of their enemies, and engaged the overwhelming odds against them. The battle lasted five days. The Blackfeet were defeated, leaving eighty warriors dead upon the field; while the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles sustained a loss of only one man, who, however, survived the battle four months, and had the happiness of receiving baptism the day before his death.

In 1842, four Pend d'Oreilles and a Cœur d'Alène were met and immediately attacked by a party of Blackfeet. At the first onset, the Blackfeet had to deplore the loss of their chief. Aroused by the noise of the musketry, the camp of the Pend d'Oreilles rushed to the assistance of their companions, and, without losing a single man, completely routed the enemy. Their escape is the more remarkable, as, rushing into the intrenchments of the Blackfeet, they received a volley of shot poured in upon them by the enemy.

The Flatheads were again attacked, during the winter hunt of 1845, by a party of the Bannocks, which, though outnumbering them nearly three times, they soon put to flight, with the loss of three of the Bannock party. The Flatheads acknowledge that the Bannocks are the bravest of their enemies; yet this did not deter them, though but seven in number, from fighting a whole village of the latter that had rashly violated the rights of hospitality.

During the summer hunt of the same year, the united camp of Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles, when threatened, hesitated not a moment to engage with a band of Blackfeet four times their number. The latter, fearing the "medicine of the Black-robes," skulked around their enemies, avoiding an open fight. The former, perceiving this, pretended flight, in order to draw the Blackfeet into the open plain: the snare succeeded; and the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles, suddenly wheeling, attacked and repulsed them with considerable loss, driving the enemy before them in hot pursuit, as they would a herd of buffaloes. Twenty-three Blackfeet warriors lay dead on the field after the engagement, while the Pend d'Oreilles lost but three, and the Flatheads only one.

I shall close these sketches of Indian warfare, so remarkably evincing, as they do, the special protection of heaven, with an account of an engagement which, as it was the occasion of my first interview with the Blackfeet, and by its consequences contributed much toward my favorable reception among them, will not, I trust, prove entirely devoid of interest, if given a little more in detail.

In 1846, while engaged in one of these hunting excursions, the camp of the Flatheads was reinforced by thirty lodges of the Nez Percés, and a dozen lodges of the Blackfeet at their own solicitation. The Flatheads encamped in the neighborhood of the Crows, purposely to renew the terms of peace, if the latter felt so disposed. The Crows, perceiving in the united camp the Nez Percés and Blackfeet, with whom they were at war, and knowing their own superiority both in numbers and bodily strength, (they are the most robust of the Indian tribes) rushed into it like a torrent, evidently more anxious to provoke a contest than to make overtures of peace. The calm remonstrances of the Flatheads and the wise admonitions of their own chief, were lost upon the now almost infuriated mutinous band of the Crows.

If the threatened outbreak had occurred at that moment, it is probable that the whole united camp would have been massacred in the hand-fight, for which evidently the Crows came prepared, with loaded guns and other destructive weapons, while the Flatheads and the others were totally unprovided. At this critical juncture, fortunately, indeed I may say providentially, my interpreter Gabriel and a Pend d'Oreille named Charles, forced their way breathless into the disordered camp, and announced the arrival of the Blackrobe who had visited them four years ago. The alarming scene they witnessed was indeed what they had expected, for as we traveled to overtake the Flathead camp at the place designed for their interview with the Crows, we perceived, from the marks of their daily encampments, that some Blackfeet and Pend d'Oreilles were with the Flatheads; we accordingly feared a collision would result from the interview. I therefore dispatched with all possible speed Gabriel and Charles to announce my arrival. Well did they execute the commission — they rode almost at full gallop during a whole day and night, performing in this short period a journey which occupied the camp fourteen days. This intelligence roused the Crow chiefs to an energetic exercise of their authority. They now seized the first missiles at hand, and enforced the weight of their arguments upon their mutinous subjects, as long as there was left in the united camp the back of a Crow on which to inflict punishment. The word *amaraba*, which means "clear out," was used so much on this occasion that it has since become proverbial among us.

This forced separation, though it may have checked the present ebullition, could not be of long duration. It needed but a spark to rekindle their hostile dispositions into open war. The next day, as if to provoke a rupture, the disaffected Crows stole thirty horses from the Flatheads. Two innocent persons were unfortunately charged with the crime, and punished. The mistake being discovered, the *amende honorable* was made, but to no purpose. The Flatheads, aware of their dangerous position, employed the interval in fortifying their camp, stationing their women and children in a place of safety, and arming themselves for the contest. An immense cloud of dust in the neighborhood of the Crow camp at ten o'clock announced the expected attack. On they came with the impetuosity of an avalanche, until within musket shot of the advanced guard of the allied camp, who had just risen to their feet to listen to a few words addressed them by their chief, Stiettietlotso, and to meet the foe. "My friends," said Moses, (the name I gave him in baptism) "if it be the will of God, we shall conquer — if it be not his will, let us humbly submit to whatever it shall please his goodness to send us. Some of us must expect to fall in this contest: if there be any one here unprepared to die, let him retire; in the meanwhile let us constantly keep Him in mind." He had scarcely finished speaking, when the fire of the enemy was returned by his band, with such terrible effect as to make them shift their mode of attack into another, extremely fatiguing to their horses. After the battle had raged for some time in this way, Victor,[3] the grand chief of the Flatheads, perceiving the embarrassed position of the enemy, cried out: "Now, my men, mount your best horses, and charge them." The manœuvre was successful.

[3] For an interesting anecdote of Victor and Pope Gregory XVI, see p. 1341.

The Crows fled in great disorder, the Flatheads abandoning the pursuit only at sundown, when they had driven the enemy two miles from their camp.

Fourteen warriors of the Crows fell in the engagement and nine were severely wounded, as we subsequently learned from three Blackfeet prisoners, who availed themselves of their capturers' defeat to recover their liberty. On the part of the allied camp, only one was killed, the son of a Nez Percé chief, who fell by the hand of a Crow chief, in so cowardly a manner, that the indignation of the allied camp was at once raised into immediate action — it was, in fact, the first shot fired and the first blood drawn on either side; the boy was yet quite a child. Besides this loss, though the engagement lasted for several hours, only three were wounded, two of them so slightly that by application of the remedies I brought with me, they recovered in a short time; the third died a few days after my arrival in the camp.

This defeat was the more mortifying to the Crows, as they had been continually boasting of their superior prowess in war, and taunting their enemies with the most insulting, opprobrious epithets. They had besides forcibly and most unjustly drawn on the engagement.

Indeed, I look upon the miraculous escape of our Christian warriors, in this fierce contest, as further evidence of the peculiar protection of heaven; especially when I consider the numerous instances of individual bravery, perhaps I should say reckless daring, displayed on the part of the allied camp. The son of a Flathead chief named Raphael, quite a youth, burning to engage in the contest, requested his father to let him have his best horse. To this the father reluctantly consented, as the boy had been rather weak from sickness. When mounted, off he bounded like an arrow from the bow, and the superior mettle of his steed soon brought him close upon the heels of a large Crow chief, who, turning his head round to notice his pursuer, pulled up his horse to punish the temerity of the boy, at the same time bending to escape the arrow then leveled at him. The boy must have shot the arrow with enormous force, for it entered under the lower left rib, the barb passing out under the right shoulder, leaving nothing but the feathers to be seen where it entered. The chief fell dead. In an instant a volley was poured in upon the boy — his horse fell perfectly riddled, with the rider under him. He was stunned by the fall, and lay to all appearances dead. According to the custom of the Indians, of inflicting a heavy blow upon the dead body of their enemy, he received while in this position a severe stroke from each individual of the several bands of Crows that passed him. He was taken up half dead by his own tribe, when they passed in pursuit of the enemy.

The ardor and impetuosity of the young men belonging to the Flathead camp amazed the oldest warriors present, and formed the theme of universal admiration, as well as the dread of their enemies. Even the women of the Flatheads mingled in the fray. One, the mother of seven children, conducted her own sons into the battle-field. Having perceived that the horse of her eldest son was breaking down in a single combat with a Crow, she threw herself between the combatants, and with a knife put the Crow to flight. Another, a young woman, perceiving that the quivers of her party were nearly exhausted, coolly collected, amidst a shower of arrows, those that lay scattered around her, and brought them to replenish the nearly exhausted store. The celebrated Mary Quille,[4] already distinguished in numerous battles, pursued, with axe in hand, a Crow, and having failed to come up with him, returned, saying: "I thought that these great talkers were men. I was mistaken: it is not worth while even for women to attempt to chase them."

The little party of Blackfeet, animated by a spirit of revenge for the loss of half their tribe, massacred the preceding year by the Crows, and probably influenced by a feeling of their safety while they fought in company with the Flathead Christians, did signal service in the combat.

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[4] Fr. Marie Quilax. No clew is found in Father De Smet's writings as to the term "celebrated" here used.

In the meantime, Gabriel and Charles, fearing the threatened outbreak, immediately started back to meet me and hasten my arrival, my presence being considered necessary to prevent the effusion of blood. I arrived at the Flathead camp the day after the battle. I found everything ready to repel a second attack, should that be attempted. I immediately sent an express to the Crows, to announce my arrival, and at the same time to convey to them the great desire I had to see them, especially for the purpose of effecting a reconciliation between the contending parties. But it appeared that after having buried their dead, they retreated precipitately; so that no account of their destination could be had. My express told me that there must have been excessive grief in the camp of the Crows, as the usual marks of it could be traced in every direction, such as the dissevered joints of fingers, and the numerous stains of blood, caused by the wounds which the relatives of the deceased inflict upon themselves on such occasions.

Shortly after my arrival, the Blackfeet came in a body to my lodge, to express in a manner truly eloquent their admiration of the Flatheads, with whom in future they desired to live on terms of the closest friendship. "To their prayers," said they, "must this extraordinary victory be attributed. While the battle lasted, we saw their old men, their women and children, on their knees, imploring the aid of heaven; the Flatheads did not lose a single man — one only fell, a young Nez Percé, and another mortally wounded. But the Nez Percé did not pray. We prayed morning and evening with the Flatheads, and heard the instructions of the chiefs." They then begged of me in their own affecting way to take pity on them and be charitable to them: they now determined to hear the words of the Great Manitou of the whites, and to follow the course which the Redeemer had marked out on earth. Having addressed them on the nature of the life they had proposed to adopt, they all without exception presented their children for baptism, to the number of eighty.

The day after this sacred ceremony, they called on me, requesting to be allowed to express in their own way the excess of joy which they felt on account of this twofold victory. On returning from the late field of battle, the warriors, at the head of whom was a young chief, chanted songs of triumph, accompanied with the beating of drums; at each beat they sent forth a wild and piercing shout; then followed the song, and so on alternately; — wild as the music was, it was not without harmony. It continued thus during almost the whole of our route. We marched up the right bank of the Yellowstone river, having on our left a chain of mountains resembling those old fortresses told of in the histories of ancient chivalry. We had scarcely arrived at the encampment, when the Blackfeet commenced, under the shade of a beautiful cluster of pines, their arrangements for a dance, insisting, at the same time, upon showing the Black-robes how highly they valued their presence among them, and how gratified they would be to have them witness this display. There was, indeed, nothing in it that could give occasion to offended modesty to turn aside and blush. I need not tell you it was not the polka, the waltz, or anything resembling the dances of modern civilized life. The women alone figure in it, old and young; from the youngest child capable of walking, to the oldest matron present. Among them I have seen several old women upward of eighty years, whose feeble limbs required the aid of a staff in their movements through the dance. Almost all appeared in the best costume of the warriors, which, however, was worn over their own dress, a sort of tunic they always wear, and which contributed also not a little to the modesty of their appearance. Some carried the arms that had done most execution in battle, but the greater part held a green bough in the hand. In proportion as the dresses increase in singularity, the colors in variety, and the jingling of the bells in sound, in the same degree is the effect upon the rude spectator heightened. The whole figure is surmounted by a casket of plumes, which by the regular movements of the individual is made to harmonize with the song, and seems to add much gracefulness to the whole scene. To lose nothing of so grand a spectacle, the Indians mount their horses, or climb the neighboring trees. The dance itself consists of a little jump, more or less lively, according to the beat of the drum. This is beaten only by the men, and all unite in the song. The women take the treble, the men the bass. To break the monotony, or lend some new interest to the scene, occasionally a sudden, piercing scream is added. If the dance languishes, haranguers and those most skilful in grimaces come to its aid. As in jumping the dancers tend toward a common centre, it often happens that the ranks become too close, then they fall back in good order to form a large circle, and commence anew in better style.

After the dance followed the presentation of the calumet. It is borne by the wife of the chief, accompanied by two other women, on the breast of one of whom rests the head of the pipe, and upon that of the other the stem handsomely adorned with feathers. The most distinguished personage of the nation precedes the calumet-bearers and conducts them around the circle of dancers. The object, probably, of the last part of the ceremony, the termination of the rejoicings, is to indicate that the best fruit of the victory they celebrate is the peace which follows. To establish this peace upon a better foundation is a thought constantly uppermost in my mind. May God grant that our efforts to plant the crop of peace among these wild children of the forest be not unavailing; I earnestly recommend these poor souls to the prayers of the faithful.

Having thus, more fully perhaps than the limits of a single letter would seem to justify, redeemed the promise given in my last, of recounting some of the advantages, spiritual and temporal, which the Flatheads enjoy, it may now be proper to resume the course of events up to the present date. On the 16th of August we left St. Mary's by a mountain gap, called the "Devil's gate," [Hell Gate; Fr. Porte de l'Enfer] a name which it has probably received from the fact of its forming the principal entrance of the marauding parties of the Blackfeet. We encamped the first night, at the foot of the [little] Blackfoot forks. Innumerable rivulets and several beautiful lakes contribute largely to this river. Toward its head, to the northeast, there is an easy pass for cars [carts?] and wagons. The valley we ascended is watered by a beautiful stream called the Cart river, so called because it was through this valley we wound our way in former days, [1841] with all our baggage, to the spot where St. Mary's now stands. We crossed the mountains in the vicinity of the Arrowstone Fork, another easy pass, and descended a tributary of the Jefferson [Big Hole river] as far as its outlet, through rather a wild, broken and mountainous country, with here and there an extensive, open plain, the ordinary resort of innumerable herds of buffalo. The seventh day found us encamped in the immense plain through which the forks of the Missouri diverge, ascending to the source at the very top of the main chain of the Rocky Mountains.

This region is still infested by grizzly bears. We killed four in an hour. We met also at every step buffalo, deer, sheep and wild goats. But it is the especial haunt of marauders, assassins and robbers from the various tribes. In traveling through these wilds, great care is to be had in order to avoid the sudden attack of some of those straggling war-parties that infest this neighborhood purposely to search for scalps, plunder and the fame of some daring exploit. We halted every evening for a few hours, to take a bite, as the trapper would say, and to give some food and rest to our animals. When it was quite dark, we would kindle a brisk fire as if to last until morning; then under cover of the night, proceed on our journey for about ten miles, to some unsuspected place, thus eluding our enemies, should any have followed in our track or be lurking in the neighborhood, awaiting the midnight hour to execute their murderous designs. From the three forks we went easterly, crossing by an easy pass the mountain chain which separates the headwaters of the Missouri from the Yellowstone river, a distance of about forty miles. We followed in the track of the Flathead camp for several days, when I sent Gabriel, my interpreter, with a Pend d'Oreille Indian in advance to discover what direction the camp had taken, and to bring back speedy news regarding their movements; and also to learn the dispositions of the Crows, whom I designed to visit. Four days later I was met by a few Flatheads on their way to find me, when I was apprised of the treachery of the Crows, and the severe chastisement they had so deservedly received. I traveled the whole of that night, and arrived next day in the allied camp, as I have already informed you. Having failed to obtain the desired interview with the Crows, our attention will be now turned toward the Blackfeet, with whose favorable disposition to receive the gospel you are already acquainted. The result of this determination will form the subject of my next letter.

CHAPTER VIII.

THREE WEEKS IN A BLACKFOOT CAMP.

Travel with allied camps — All sick from drinking bad water — Lost son found — Misbehavior of Nez Percés — Missionaries leave with the Blackfeet — Death of Nicholas, the first Blackfoot convert — Pantomime entertainment by a Blackfoot artist — Piegans come in and Flatheads rejoin them — Blackfoot hymn composed around the fire — A trial of faith in the matter of horses — Enemies reconciled.

Very Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:[1]

YOU are already acquainted with our determination to accompany the Blackfeet in returning to their country. In the sequel of this letter you will learn with pleasure how far Almighty God has blessed our humble efforts in carrying this resolution into effect. After the battle described in my letter from the Yellowstone camp, the Crows, it appears, fled to the Wind River Mountains, determined, however, to avenge themselves on the Blackfeet, whom they now designed to follow into their own country. The latter, probably through fear of this assault, resolved to remain with the Flathead camp until it reached the headwaters of the Muscle-shell river. In leaving the Yellowstone our direction lay toward the north,[2] through a broken and undulating, dry and woodless country, destitute of any water fit to drink — stagnant pools of brackish water being the only kind found here to satiate the thirst. We were all sick for several days from this cause. Only a few straggling bulls were seen or killed, scarcely sufficient, indeed, to supply the wants of our numerous camp. The great variety of matter incidental to this journey with the united Indian camp will appear, perhaps, more satisfactory if given in the same order in which it was entered in my diary; I therefore present you with an extract from it:—

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[1] Letter date Fort Lewis or Maragnon, September 26, 1846.

[2] Fr. northwest.

Sept. 8th, 1846. The elements of discord existing between the Nez Percés and Blackfeet give every appearance of an open rupture. The Nez Percés being evidently in the wrong, the Flatheads, following our example, endeavor to convince them of the impropriety of their conduct; but to no purpose, the principal men among them refusing, for the second time, to smoke the calumet of peace.

9th. Toward night a touching incident occurred in our lodge. A Nez Percé chief, who declares himself our friend, entered, accompanied by three Blackfeet, a warrior, an interpreter, and a young man about twenty years of age. This youth, when about one year old, lost both his parents; his mother, a captive among the Blackfeet, died the first days of her captivity; his father, whose country is far distant from the Blackfeet, is altogether lost to him. The poor orphan became the adopted child of a Blackfoot woman, who brought him up as she would her own offspring. The adopted son grew up, imbibing all the notions and customs of his new friends, knowing no other relations than those around him. To-day, the woman whom he believed to be his real mother, declared to him that she was not; and that his father, whom he had not seen since he was one year old, was now sitting beside him. "Who is my father?" he anxiously inquired. "There," said the woman, pointing to the Nez Percé chief, who entered the lodge with him. The doubts of the father were soon removed, as he hastily stripped the youth's garments from his back, and there discovered the mark of a burn received in the parental lodge while yet an infant. The sudden burst of feeling elicited from these children of nature at this unexpected meeting, can be better imagined than described. The chief has no grown children, he is therefore the more eloquent in endeavoring to persuade his son to return to his native country, presenting him, at the same time, with one of the best and most beautiful of his steeds. I joined to the entreaties of the father the strongest motives I could urge. The son, whose heart is divided between nature and grace, begged to be allowed to bid farewell to the companions and friends of his youth, who were now absent — he could not, he declared, thus abruptly leave her who, with motherly care and anxiety, had watched over him so many years, and whom he had always so tenderly loved and looked upon as his mother. "Now that the Black-robes are with us," he said, "I desire to be of the happy number of those who are about to introduce them to my friends, and to listen to the words of the Great Spirit, whom they have come to announce. After that, but not before, shall I follow my father."

10th. The Nez Percés announce their determination of leaving the united camp. The Flatheads, who dread more the presence of a friend capable of injuring their souls, than that of an enemy who can only hurt the body, are excessively rejoiced at this announcement. The Blackfeet also are highly pleased to see them go. The separation took place about eight o'clock; but they had gone only a short distance from the camp, when, fearing an attack from the Crows, they rejoined the main body, determined to remain as long as the great hunt shall last. To avoid the outbreak, evidently threatened by the ill-will of the Nez Percés, the Blackfeet have resolved to leave the camp on the morrow. This day I baptized a Nez Percé, who had been shot in the late battle with the Crows — he cannot survive much longer.

11th. Farewell to the Flatheads. All came to shake hands with us, the grief of their hearts was depicted in their countenances; we all perceived how deeply they felt the separation. A great number of their cavaliers accompany us for a considerable distance; six go as far as our encampment, not less than twenty-five miles.

Our course lay through an extensive level plain, at the very base of the Muscle-shell Mountains. These rise abruptly from the plain around, resembling broken, elevated islands in the midst of the ocean, and their tops tufted with a heavy growth of cedar and pine. While admiring the singular appearance of the scenery, my attention is called off to a very distressing accident. An old Indian is seen falling from his horse, receiving in the fall a severe wound between his eyes; he remains senseless, all efforts to revive him are fruitless. It was the old Blackfoot chief, Nicholas, whom I baptized five years ago;[3] he acted ever since the part of a most effective missionary, in preparing the way for the introduction of the gospel among his tribe. Today he entered what he called his own country, chanting hymns of praise and thanksgiving in the happy anticipation of soon presenting us to his brethren. He dies! not even a sigh escapes him. Oh, how profound are the designs of God. Happily he leaves a son worthy of so excellent a sire. His attachment to religion equals that of his father. Having resided several years among the Flatheads, he has acquired a perfect knowledge of their language — acting in the capacity of interpreter, he has already rendered me considerable assistance. Notwithstanding his great grief, he performs the last sad offices near the tomb of his father with the composure and firmness of a Christian. It is customary among the Blackfeet to express their grief by wailings and lacerations of the body, calculated only to afflict those around, though intended by them as a mark of respect toward the lamented dead. The son of Nicholas, himself a chief and a great brave, knowing the Christian practice, passes the night in prayer, with his wife and children, near the funeral couch of his father. His friends and brother Piegans (pagan in name and in fact), would now and then gather around him, and kneeling beside the mourner, pour forth, Christian-like, many a pious ejaculation in behalf of their deceased chieftain. The remains of the venerable chief were placed in the grave by the hands of his own son, and over his tomb the emblem of salvation was raised — the cross of the Saviour, whose words were now for the first time announced to the lonely tribes of this long-benighted wilderness. At the very moment the last prayers of the funeral service were uttered, "May he rest in peace," a busy stir breaks the death-like silence of the surrounding crowd of Indians. A Flathead approached in full gallop, announcing the pleasing intelligence that two Blackfeet had reached their camp, and informed them that the tribe of Nicholas was within two days' march of us.[4]

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[3] See *ante*, p. 338.

The 12th, the day of Nicholas' burial, some of the hunters are sent out to look for game; for scarcity was making itself felt in the camp. One of these scouts soon spies in the distance immense herds of buffalo, appearing as little black dots. He returns toward camp to announce the glad news and mounts a high hill, whence he can be seen, standing on his horse, holding the stock of his gun high in the air; it is a signal to announce the presence of the animals. Then the chief proclaims a great hunt; the hunters rope their best running horses, which are jumping and prancing with joy. We start at a gallop; but when they are about to rush upon their prey, the horsemen stop, to recite, after the example of the Flatheads, three Ave Marias, in honor of the Holy Virgin. (Some of them know it in Flathead.) Can I express the joy I felt at hearing this prayer under these circumstances? I shall not try; pious souls will feel it sufficiently. The prayer ended, the hunters get to horse again and pursue the animals, which lead them to a great distance. Each killed one, two or three, according to the strength of his horse. There was an abundant supper in every lodge and all the fires were surrounded with numerous beefsteaks; mine was garnished with a wreath of tongues, humps and kidneys, which the hunters had reserved for the Black-robes, and which we shared like brothers with all who came to call.

After supper a splendid evening entertainment, given in our lodge by a Blackfoot, so good, so sensible and at the same time so original, that it was a real pleasure in every respect to us to hear him. All communication was by signs. Here are some of the observations he had made during his stay in the Flathead camp. "When we arrived," he said, "we had plenty of meat. The Flatheads and the Nez Percés were short; they visited us and we gave them to eat according to custom. The Flatheads, before they would touch anything, put their hands to their foreheads, made the sign of the cross, then a good prayer; whereas the Nez Percés fell upon the food like starved animals. Sunday the Flatheads sat quiet in their lodges, thought only of praying to God and encouraging one another in well-doing; while the Nez Percés put on their fine clothes and scattered here and there, for more harm than good. I noticed especially that the Nez Percés maintained no such reserve toward our young people as did the Flatheads; so, in the fight with the Crows, it was only the Nez Percés who had any losses to mourn; I saw by this that the white men's God is good to the good; but also that when he chooses, he knows how to find the wicked, to punish them as they deserve."

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[4] From this point to the close of the next chapter the French narrative is followed, as being more complete.

The astonishing successes of the Flatheads, in the wars that have been forced on them the last three years, have confirmed their enemies in the belief that they have held of late, that the medicine of the Black-robes is stronger than theirs.

To return to our Blackfoot observer, he ended his pantomime by giving us to understand that he liked two things very much: play and drink; but that notwithstanding he would not be the last to leave these delights, a resolve which he frequently renews since his children were baptized. Two Piegans have come to camp with the news that their band is in the neighborhood.

Sunday, 13th. We are obliged to move our camp farther; for in the place where we have passed the night there is nothing to make a fire of but buffalo manure, and the rain that is falling prevents our making use of it. The fine rain that sprinkles us as we proceed soon changes to a kind of snow likest to hail, and so sharp that one can hardly have his hands bare. The chief who went ahead has started a good fire for us. The three little children of Sata, Nicholas' son, have come to sit by us. Hardly had little Antoine's hands seen the fire, when he runs to pull from a cherry tree near by a branch full of cherries, which he brings to his sister Adèle; but she passes them on to her younger sister Marie; a moment later, seeing a little unbaptized Blackfoot eating cherries, she said to her brother: "Did you see him? He didn't pray before eating."—After a long fatiguing march, we passed the night in a poplar grove on the banks of Judith river.

The bad weather prevents the two camps from coming together; the reunion will be only the more notable, for to-morrow is the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The Blackfoot chief asks whether it will not be grievous to us to see them testify their joy in their manner, namely, by painting their faces and dancing and singing at a great rate.—My answer was, "Do your best to show your friends and brothers that your hearts are glad."

We learn that the head chief of the Piegans, called Big Lake, himself admonished his people to listen well when the Black-robes were there; an occurrence the more remarkable because he scarcely ever speaks save through the mouth of another, who is called Tail Bearer (Grosse Toque) by reason of the enormous *toque* that he wears on his forehead. The *toque* among the Blackfeet is a tail, seven or eight feet long, made of horse and buffalo hair, interwoven with their own. But instead of floating behind in the ordinary way, this tail is located upon the party's forehead and stands out spirally, something like a rhinoceros horn. Such a tail among the Blackfeet is a mark of great distinction and bravery; the longer the tail, the greater courage must the bearer display upon occasion.

Akasia, another Piegan chief, who was met two years ago by a Flathead war party, and whom the Flatheads let go, out of respect to their missionary (Father Point) comes to see us this afternoon with one of his wives. "As soon as I learned of your approach," he said to us, after shaking hands, "I set out to see you." Since his encounter with the Flatheads he has made no war upon them.— He wears a *toque,* and has besides courage and character which rightfully earns him the esteem of his tribe. I feel confident that such a man will be one of the first to come over entirely to us. After praying and smoking with us, he went away again, toward sunset, to make ready against to-morrow's reunion.

On the 14th, a hitch.— The Flathead camp that we left four days ago is only nine or ten miles from ours; they have sent word to that of Big Lake that they are coming to have a talk. In the latter there is a division of opinion, of which we are the innocent cause; Big Lake is for putting off the interview until after the Black-robes have been met, while his aide-de-camp, Tail Bearer, claims that the interview should have the preference; he yields, however, to Big Lake's judgment, and about ten o'clock word is brought to us that he is not far away. All the horsemen of the camp, more prompt than we, are off already, but they are waiting on a hill for us to take the lead. Then they form in a very long single line behind us; we advance into a lovely and very smooth plain, rending the air with our yells and songs of joy. At the agreed signal, the discharge of all the guns, we alight. Tail Bearer advances first, followed by all the tribe, to shake hands with us and bid us welcome in the most affectionate manner. After him comes Big Lake with some of his braves. The calumet is presented immediately; and after this symbol of peace, brotherhood and good harmony has gone around a few times, passing from mouth to mouth, tongues are loosened as if by magic, and everybody begins telling the news. Then I address them a little preparatory discourse, to dispose their minds and hearts to listen attentively to the gospel.

They respond with a loud voice to this appeal and express the satisfaction and pleasure that it has been to them to listen to the Black-robes.[5] We were still conversing, when the approach of the Flathead camp was announced. It came up even more cordially than that of Big Lake; neither is this anything to wonder at; the savage can open his heart, but he wishes to know to whom he is opening it. Soon the unconstrained manners of our neophytes spread to the Blackfeet, and before the day was over old and young, Blackfeet and Flatheads, almost all were testifying the same pleasure at seeing us amongst them. After the evening prayers, recited in the Flathead and Blackfoot tongues, I made them a little address, taking for my text this happy reunion and the friendly and peaceable spirit that seemed to animate both nations. Oh! how touching a sight it was! What a consoling triumph for Religion, to see united under the cross these warriors, whose scars told of so many bloody battles with each other; these warriors who had never met save in mortal hatred, to drown in blood the hate and vengeance that they had sworn each other. To-day, on their knees, mingling together, having only one heart and one soul, they address their prayers to the Master of Life, calling him for the first time their common Father and listening eagerly to his holy word.

The head men of both nations came together that evening in my lodge; Victor, head chief of the Flatheads, by the simplicity and smoothness of his conversation gains the good will of his hearers entirely. He begins by telling some of his warlike adventures; but, as it is easy to see, much less with the intention of exalting himself than to show forth the protection that the true God always grants to those who devote themselves to his service. The Blackfeet, who suffered in the last fight with the Crows, are pleased to confirm his account, and add further edifying details of things they have seen in the Flathead camp. The sign of the cross is especially exalted, by those who have already given their hearts to the true God, as a certain pledge of victory; and to-day (September 14th) is the Exaltation of the holy cross.

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[5] "On one occasion, while on a missionary excursion to the Blackfeet, Father De Smet was treated to a bit of romance. He had addressed through his interpreter a gathering of these savages, who sat on the side of a hill, the chiefs on the ridge and the common crowd below, all attentive to his instruction. When he had ended, one of the chiefs came down to shake hands with him, saluting him in very good English, telling him at the same time that he had a rather poor interpreter. 'These people,' said the chief, 'are deeply interested in what you have been preaching to them, but your interpreter has not put it before them in the right way.' 'But you, sir, please, where did you learn English?' asked Father De Smet, amazed and bewildered with astonishment. 'In Ireland, faith,' replied the Blackfoot chief.' "—*Palladino.*

On the 15th, the Octave of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin, the new disciples of the cross took part at a solemn mass. I performed it in the open air, under a bower of green boughs, the work of the Indians, to implore the blessings of heaven upon this great desert and the wandering tribes that roam over it, praying that they may be joined in the bonds of peace. Flatheads, Nez Percés, Piegans, Bloods, Grosventres and Blackfeet of different tribes, to the number of more than 2,000, surrounded the humble altar that had been raised in the desert to the living God, upon which the victim without spot was offered for them. The single-minded harmony and joy that seem to animate the Flatheads and the representatives of the various tribes of Blackfeet, are truly unheard of; one would say that their ancient quarrels are long forgotten; this is remarkable, because it is a duty of an Indian to cherish in his heart, even to his last breath, a desire of vengeance upon his enemies. Will this peace last? Let us pray the Lord to strengthen their good dispositions and grant them perseverance. Already the question of baptizing all the Piegan children, as was done with those of the Little Robes, is raised; but for the sake of the businesses and pleasures of the day, the ceremony is deferred to another day.

Sept. 16th. The Flathead chiefs speak so cordially and well before the Blackfoot chiefs that the hearts of most are won, as may easily be seen. Not so with the Nez Percés, whose turbulent humor has only been repressed by the example of the Flatheads. At this second separation, the Flatheads evince the same affection for us as at the first. Their chiefs are the last to leave the camp, that everything may go off amicably and in order. That evening, the Blackfeet gather around our fire and we all busy ourselves in composing a chant. The subject of this composition is the consecration of their persons to him who has alone given being to all that exists.

Here is the first strophe and the refrain, which will serve at the same time as a sample of their language.

Apistotokié Nina
Pikanniè to-kanakos;
Akwa spemóki tzagkoma
Agziéwa ziekamotos.[6]

Sept. 17th. Nothing very noteworthy happened. After dinner, a visit from two Blackfeet (Bloods?) of those who pass for the worst of all. They inform us that their people will be enchanted to see us; that we need not have a shadow of a fear for our persons; that already some sixty children, who have been baptized by a Black-robe who came from Red river, are wearing crosses at their necks. Making preparations for the baptism of the little Piegans.

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[6] As probably the first bit of verse composed in the language of the Blackfeet, this stanza may have some little literary interest. Competent authorities declare it to be very good Blackfoot, except that the last word should more properly be "ka-mo-tan-i." It is said to mean something like this:

God Almighty;
Piegans are all his children.
He is going to help us on earth;
If you are good, he will save your soul.

Father De Smet gave the following rhymed version, which he called a "traduction littérale:"

O Grand Esprit! notre Père,
Regarde en pitié tes enfants;
Ils seront saints sur la terre,
Si tu soutiens leurs pas tremblants.

Sept. 18th. Various news. The Nez Percés, yielding to the frequently expressed desire of the Flatheads, have at length parted from them. Two Grosventre Blackfeet have been killed by the Crows. Seven Piegan lodges have been followed by a large party of Crees. It is not known what has become of them. A chief comes to announce to us that the Blackfeet of every tribe are gathering about Fort Lewis; that this fort is daily expecting three Mackinaw boats with a large shipment from St. Louis. I am assured that there is no liquor (always the cause of most Indian troubles) in this year's shipment, and that this infamous traffic is to be discontinued from now on. About two in the afternoon a great hunt.

Sept. 20th. Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. Baptism of more than 100 children and two old men, with all the customary ceremonies. To describe this day would be only to repeat what has already been said in other letters.

Sept. 21st. Return of a war-party of the Blood family of Blackfeet from a Crow camp, from which they took twenty-seven horses. The leaders, one of whom is a son and the other a brother of the head chief, are particularly friendly toward the Black-robes. The second long ago forsook the worship that the others still render to the sun and moon. He assures us that we will be welcome in his tribe, in which there are already a great number of baptized children.

Sept. 22d. A feast, given in my lodge, to the newcomers. It is preceded by the baptism of an old Piegan, formerly head chief of his tribe; he only resigned his post, in favor of his brother, called Big Lake, because his great age and still greater modesty led him to think it would be best. Besides he continues to exert a most fortunate influence upon his people by his great natural eloquence. He it is, probably, to whom the Piegans owe what those of Little Robe owe to their chief; to pass rightfully for the most tractable of all the Blackfeet. One very rare, perhaps unique thing; he has never had but one wife, with whom he has always lived in peace. He received in baptism the name of Ignatius Xavier, and wears the medal of these saints upon his breast. Let us hope that the beginnings of grace which his nation has received in him may not be long without bringing forth fruits of salvation for the remainder.

After dinner, an unusual token of joy. The Indians draw apart and dance in very choice costumes, which have not been seen before since our arrival. Plumes in profusion, ribbons of all colors, all kinds of designs in porcupine-quill embroidery, necklaces of glass and porcelain, little bells on the skirts of their robes, everything comes out for this dance. The most remarkable head-dress is a lofty bonnet of *quillon* feathers (a kind of eagle), the emblem of the Indian warrior; the arrangement of it recalls what the first Indians of South America are supposed to have worn. A thousand voices join in songs of rejoicing, accompanied with the sound of drums, tambourines and the repeated firing of all the guns in camp.

The Catholic prayers have been translated and are recited every morning and evening. Some already know what they must believe and have the faith. May the works soon be added and take deep root in their hearts! Sata,[7] our Flathead-Blackfoot interpreter, is an apostle. After each interpretation, he sums up his discourse; and these reviews, coming from the fullness of his heart, are never without their effect. Still the word Sata differs but little in meaning from our word Satan — and since names, among the Indians, are usually personally descriptive, one may draw conclusions, from such a name given to a Blackfoot, as to the power of grace that has brought him to the point where he now is.

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[7] This Indian acted as guide to Charles Larpenteur, in his unsuccessful attempt to reach the Flatheads in the fall of 1848. Larpenteur speaks of him as "a small Indian named Sata, a half-breed Flathead and Blackfoot."

Sept. 23d. Nothing noteworthy save a trial of the faith of the new catechumens. This is a theft of two horses, stolen from their camp by a stranger, habitually residing in the Flathead camp. From time to time, some individuals from west of the mountains have forgotten what they ought to be; but a few very rare misdeeds, loudly disapproved by the conduct of the whole people, only bring out more brightly the good spirit which animates the mass. This theft, too, is to a certain extent excusable on account of the critical position the thief found himself in. He had planned to go with us to the Blood Blackfoot camp, and we were already a long way from that of the Flatheads, when he learned that the Bloods had declared "That they would kill any Flathead who had the misfortune to set foot among them." Hereupon the poor man, who did not wish to die yet, and who had only a very thin horse to escape death, left the latter and simply took two others that were fit to flee from the threatened danger on. Besides, these horses will be sent back, with or without his consent, to their owner as soon as the thing is known. It will not be the first instance of such restitution.

Sept. 24th. Our Lady of Mercy. The missionaries, accompanied by a large number of Indians, ride on ahead of the camp to reach Fort Lewis or Maragnon, which is only a few miles away. As we ride, the Piegan Little Chief dismounts, asks me to do the same and invites me to smoke, which is the invariable prelude to any serious affair. "There is a quarrel," he said, "between me and a chief of the Bloods. I shall settle it at the fort. In a few minutes I shall see my mortal enemy, who for a long time has threatened to take my life. He is famous for his courage, but even more for the badness of his heart. He murdered by treachery a Nez Percé who was under my protection, while he was smoking my pipe, eating my food and resting under the sacred asylum of my tent. I would have been forever dishonored if I had not taken prompt vengeance for this shameful and detestable act, and washed the stain from my tribe with blood. I shot the murderer at arm's length and in his own lodge. He did not die. His wound is healed now. He is waiting to kill me. I am not afraid, I am a chief too. Black-robe, I have heard your word, and I have new feelings in my heart. I would like to make peace with my enemy; but his heart is so sore that he will not hear of any arrangement. My brother has done all that he could, but he still keeps his resolution of shedding my blood. This is what I will do; I will offer him a horse to cover up his wound. If he is satisfied, it is good. If not I shall kill him."

The Black-robes, as may be guessed, were of opinion that everything ought to be tried before coming to the latter alternative. I even offered myself as mediator between them, and we made a vow to the Holy Virgin, that the affair might be settled amicably. For, as I had never witnessed the spilling of one drop of human blood, I felt assured that Almighty God would spare me the painful sight on this present occasion. We rode on. Little Chief and his companions prepare their arrows and load their guns. When we are within sight of the fort, two Blackfeet come out in haste to meet us; they tell Little Chief that if he or any of his men come nearer, their lives are in danger. They return at once to announce our arrival. Soon the great bell of the fort is heard. In honor of whom? It is the priests to whom this honor is addressed; for the defenders of the fort are French, or Spanish, or Canadians, that is to say, nearly all Catholics. Paying no heed to the advice we have received, we start for the fort at a gallop. The gates were opened to us at once and all the whites saluted us with the greatest cordiality, despite the absence of the commandant, who came in a few minutes later to add still further to the civilities with which we were greeted. After the first compliments, two horses are brought up to us, and we repair to an island in the Missouri, upon which are a dozen lodges of the Blood Blackfeet, and in the midst of them that of the murderer in question. The extreme cleanliness that prevailed in it showed that it had been prepared to receive us. We were introduced first; after us Little Chief the Piegan and his companions, Omakzikinne or Big Lake, Onisetêstamik or White Bull, Masteisttamok or Crow Bull, Minêpoassin or Chief's Word, Eketzo or Big Roller, Sata or the Wicked and Akaniaki or Bruised with Blows; next the Blood Blackfeet, and last of all the murderous chief, whose features sufficiently betrayed the vengeful feelings that were boiling in his heart.

I explained the motives of my visit and pleaded strongly in favor of reconciliation, at the same time declaring my determination not to leave the lodge until it was accomplished. The Blackfoot chief listened attentively, and then made a very apt reply; his last words were: "All is forgotten. How could my heart be bad, after what the Black-robe has said!" These reassuring words gave rise to several short speeches from the assembly, which shows that there is eloquence everywhere when the heart speaks.

Little Chief's address closed with an act that moved me much; he went up to him who had been his most cruel enemy, and after embracing him tenderly gave him, beside the promised horse, a fair robe adorned with porcupine quills and pearls, which he threw over him on the spot. The pipe of peace was at once lighted to seal the agreement, went round the assembly several times, and all blew their smoke upward in a spirit of thanksgiving. Unnecessary to say that after the smoking all withdrew with their hearts full of a joy which it is easier to feel than to describe.

I recommend these poor Blackfeet in a very especial wise to your holy sacrifices and your prayers.

CHAPTER IX.[1]

RETURN TO ST. LOUIS.

De Smet leaves Point among Blackfeet and starts for the States — Fort Benton to Kansas City by skiff — Beasts and birds — Bad Lands — Elkhorn Steeple — Their boat sinks — Various encounters with Indians — Making progress with the Sioux — Mormon encampments — Meets President Young — New town of St. Joseph — Driven from river by ice.

AFTER maturely weighing the various plans which might be most useful for the conversion and civilization of these tribes, it was decided that Father Point[2] should stay among the Blackfeet, to prepare the way for an establishment and to prosecute the instruction and conversion of that people, while I should descend the river to St. Louis, to inform our superiors of the state of the missions and the necessity of increasing the number of missionaries, and to plead the cause of the Blackfeet with them. It was on the 28th of September [1846] that I said farewell to my worthy and zealous companion, to the gentlemen of the fort and their good employees, all of whom had showed me much civility and kindness, and to those of the Blackfeet also who were present, who had not ceased to give me sincere evidences of their attachment. Our departure was saluted by the discharge of the guns of the fort and a large number of small arms. Amid a thousand good wishes for a successful voyage, we launched our bark upon the rapid current of the Missouri, at about 900 Flemish leagues (2,850 miles) [2,285] from the mouth of the river. It was noon when we lost sight of the fort. We soon passed Shonkin creek [la Rivière du Chantier][8] and camped twenty-five miles further down, near Bird island.

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[1] This chapter follows the French text of Letter XXVI, *Missions de l'Orégon*, and corresponds in part to the latter portion of Letter XXIV, *Oregon Missions*, printed as addressed to the Provincial of Missouri from the St. Louis University, January 1, 1847.

[2] *Further history of the Blackfeet Missions.*— Father Point remained among the Blackfeet through the ensuing winter, but in the spring of 1847 left Fort Lewis for Canada, in compliance with orders issued three years before by his superiors in Europe, which had been that length of time in reaching him. No further efforts were made in behalf of the Blackfeet until 1859, in April of which year Father Adrien Hoeken came among them. He established a mission on the Teton river, near the present town of Choteau. This was abandoned in March, 1860, for a site on Sun river, which was occupied until the following August, when Father Hoeken returned to the States. The Mission of St. Peter's was founded that same year by Fathers Giorda and Imoda and has been maintained to the present time, with an interruption between the years 1866 and 1874.

The next day, as we passed between two ranges of high and abrupt bluffs, on which several large herds of bighorn or mountain sheep were grazing, we surprised an old buck, large and fat, which our hunter secured; the first victim sacrificed to our necessities on the Missouri. His antlers were about three feet long and eighteen inches in circumference at their bases. The habits of the mountain sheep are not like those of any other creature. He chooses for his favorite dwelling the ruggedest spots of the inaccessible mountains. The cold of winter drives him down into one of the numerous valleys [parks] where the verdure of spring rarely fades, but he returns as the season advances to the snow-covered tops of the mountains. After passing the Marias and Sandy rivers, where we saw in immense plains countless herds of buffalo, and several times grizzly bears came within rifle range, we entered a very remarkable region, where formations of yellow sandstone are presented on both sides of the river, exhibiting most fantastic shapes and fissures and offering to the astonished imagination a vast variety of comparisons; think of urns of all figures and forms; of round and square tables of all dimensions; of pillared pulpits, fantastically carved; thousands of rocky excrescences, in the forms of big and little mushrooms; then come altars with their candelabra, forts, castles and miniature cities. It is among these strange shapes that the Eagle, Judith and Dog rivers enter the stream.

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[8] Shonkin is a corruption of *Chantier*, boat yard. The Fort Benton or Fort Lewis boat yard was at the mouth of this stream.

Early in the morning of the 1st of October, we found ourselves in the place called the Bad Lands, from which we emerged toward evening and made our camp on Big island [la Grande Ile]. For our supper we had the choice pieces of a fine blacktailed deer. The day after, a large male of the same species supplied our rustic table, in the place called la Mauvaise Anse (Bad Bend or Cove), where we passed the night. All the region along the river traversed to-day is rugged, sterile and much cut up by ravines. In the course of the 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th we passed successively the Beauchamp, Musselshell [Coquille], Fourchette [?Puchet], Big Dry and Milk rivers.

In these five days my men killed seven fine does, four very fat buffalo cows, five bustards, [wild turkeys] one blacktailed deer, a wolverine for fun, as his flesh is of no value; and a grizzly bear out of pure malice. He, however, tried to be even with us; after being shot twice he made a furious leap from a height of twenty feet, meaning to fall upon our skiff and rend us in return; luckily he missed the boat and found himself rolling in the river, but without renouncing his vengeance. As he came swimming after us, my two men reloaded their guns and shot him at arms' length, killing him this time. The grizzly is the king of animals here; all recognize his supremacy. The wolf and the panther dare not go near him, nor touch what belongs to him, not even the carcass of his prey, which he has buried with stones and earth. Still he always takes flight at the sight or smell of man; the eye of man has a magical power over him, as over all other animals; it is rare for him to attack any one, unless he is wounded. When he has been struck by a ball, he rushes in rage toward the spot whence the shot came. Woe to the hunter whom he meets then, unless he is well prepared for mortal combat! The *carcajou* [wolverine] is an animal that is found only in the Rocky Mountains; at least that is my belief. It appears to be of a special genus, and partakes of the natures of the wolf and bear. It has prodigious strength.

The great buffalo herds are invariably accompanied or followed by bands of wolves of various species. The white and tawny kinds are most common. They devour the carcasses of buffalo that die of sickness or as a result of wounds or accidents; and lacking them they kill others as they need them. They display much boldness and sagacity in their rapacious operations, and seem to act in concert and as if by understanding. First they post themselves at proper distances in a line in the direction the victim is supposed to take; then two or three charge into the middle of the herd, cut out the fattest and drive it toward the spot where their companions are waiting. The victim then runs between two ranks of wolves. As it goes on, fresh bands join in the chase, until at last, exhausted by fatigue, it stops and becomes their prey. They hamstring it first to prevent its escape, and then devour it alive.

At other times they practice a still more cunning stratagem; they urge their prey up some steep place, beyond which lies a deep ravine or precipice. There they form a half circle about it, closing in continually and redoubling their threats and howls. The poor buffalo, placed between two fires, hesitates a moment at sight of the abyss; but soon, bewildered by the yelping and baying, it attempts the only way to escape from its assailants, jumps off and falls crushed at the bottom of the ravine. Then our highwaymen also go down by the roundabout way, and partake together of the fruit of their industry.

On the 8th of October, we passed within sight of a very remarkable tower, in the middle of a fine plain in the neighborhood of Porcupine creek.[4] Several thousand elk-horns, piled one upon another, form this singular structure. I could not learn what caused the erection of such a strange monument, nor when and by whom it was built. Herds of elk and deer are very numerous here.

On the 9th and 10th we passed the Poplar and Big Muddy rivers. My hunters continued their ravages among the animals. They killed one bull merely for the sake of his tongue, hump and marrowbones, a very fat black bear (the most delicate of his kind), a red-tailed deer, several ducks and bustards, which were passing in thousands, flying southeasterly and announcing the approach of winter. All the way down from Fort Lewis we had observed beaver works everywhere on the river. These interesting and laborious animals multiply exceedingly in these regions, where the trappers let them alone to avoid the war-parties which roam here incessantly.

On the 11th, we arrived at Fort Union, near the mouth of the Yellowstone and 600 miles from Fort Lewis; we have therefore made about fifty miles a day. The gentlemen of the fort received us with much politeness and affability. We accepted with pleasure and thankfulness the hospitality they offered us, and rested there for a day, in which time I baptized five half-breed children. I started out on the 13th with my two companions. Buffalo appeared in herds on all sides, and we saw bear, deer, elk and antelope at every turn of the river; there is little danger of having to fast at this season of the year. On the 15th, our desire to proceed in spite of a violent wind was calmed all at once by a wave that filled our skiff and sent us to the bottom of the river. Fortunately the river was only five feet deep. We contented ourselves therefore with waiting for a more favorable wind and drying our garments, the only ones we possessed, and warming our stiffened limbs. After dinner the wind changed, and we came on down gaily enough, and the next day we made up our lost time; with the aid of sails, we covered a distance of sixty to seventy miles. On the 17th, we met seven lodges of Assiniboins, who received us civilly into their little camp, invited us to a feast and at our departure offered us abundant provisions. The same day eight Grosventres of the Missouri hailed us, with all the marks of respect and friendship, insisting upon our taking a big pile of buffalo tongues. The buffalo continue very numerous; neither is there any lack of grizzly bears, which are all the time drawing the fire of my companions. We camped at about the middle of the first great bend of the Missouri.

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[4] Maximilian of Wied visited the Elkhorn Steeple July 11, 1833, and gives a picture of it among his plates. He says it was a propitiatory or medicine pile, erected by Blackfeet war or hunting parties from the antlers and buffalo horns with which the prairie was littered, and that they indicated the strength of their parties with red marks on the horns. It stood 800 yards from the river and was sixteen to eighteen feet high and twelve to fifteen through. The fate of this curious relic is told by Father De Smet in a letter. See p. 1372.

On the 18th a favorable wind encouraged us to hoist our sails again; we made about ten knots an hour and at dawn of the next day reached Fort Berthold, where we were politely received and treated by Mr. Bruyère. The Grosventres have their main village here; the most of them were off on their winter hunt. They build their lodges of earth like the Kansas and Osages. I was invited to a feast by those who had stayed to keep the village; this is an invariable token of their respect and good will. They are in general friendly to the whites and famous for their bravery and their courage in war. They have vast fields of maize, pumpkins and sweet potatoes which they till with care.

On the 20th, several bands of Indians call to us from the shore and make signs for us to come to them. The best thing to do in such cases is to obey, and you seldom have cause to repent of this small condescension; you accept the calumet; you furnish something to fill it with; you smoke one or two rounds with them and in their manner; both sides exchange little items of news; if they see that you are without provisions, they hasten to give you the choice pieces from their hunt; then you embrace and part friends. To refuse to come, when you are on their premises and they call you, would irritate them and expose you to great dangers. After this we continue our way in peace, and camp for the night at the mouth of Knife river. Here a real and grave danger awaited us, from which we came off nicely. We made a big fire, for it was cold in the open air, and it was discovered by a band of Indians, armed to the teeth; they had come close to us, under cover of the darkness, without our perceiving them. Fortunately the chief recognized my cross and black robe by the firelight; he ran to me, threw away his hatchet, embraced and hugged me, crying "Ah! how near you were to starting for the spirit land! We thought you were far away; we took you for an enemy." Then they all put their two hands over their mouths, an expressive token of their great astonishment. All this was done in less time than it takes to write it. I thanked them from the bottom of my heart; we passed the evening agreeably enough; the calumet was presented and bound the knots of friendship yet more closely; afterward a cup of well-sweetened coffee, with buffalo hump and tongues roasted on the spit, put all these warriors in such an excessively good humor that they honored us with a song and dance. They belonged to the tribe of the Aricaras, a meeting with whom in the desert is always dreaded by the white men; for they are thieves and murderers. They promised me solemnly at leaving that in future they would always greet the whites calumet in hand. Next day we breakfasted at Fort Madison or Mandan, with the amiable Mr. Des Autels.

Some hours after we started on again, we passed under a scalp, tied to the end of a long pole, swinging over the river. It was probably a sacrifice to the sun, to obtain other scalps or a good hunt. Soon we came in front of the winter quarters of the Aricaras, encamped and fortified in a fair grove of poplars on the river bank. A great number of Indians all together, with shouts and gestures, invited us to come over. We made a great showing of zeal with our paddles, and they received us very cordially and invited us to several feasts; but as we could not spare the time for such a delay they showed their liberality by giving us tongues, humps and other parts of buffalo, in so great a quantity that we could not get half of it in our skiff. Though it was late, we decided to continue our journey and camp some way below the village, especially to avoid having to spend the night in feasting. We were much delayed in the five following days by adverse winds, which prevented our progress often enough. On the morning of the 26th we came to the encampment of Mr. Goulé, the American Fur Company's clerk in the neighborhood of the *Butes au Grés* or Sandstone Buttes. There I baptized several half-breed children.

Taking advantage of favorable weather, we came on four days and nights without stopping, and early in the morning of the 30th we reached Fort Pierre, where is the main warehouse for furs and supplies of the American Company. During this run we had passed by several fine rivers that empty into the Missouri, such as the Grand, the Little Cheyenne, the Moreau and the Big Cheyenne. Fort Pierre is 700 [586] miles from Fort Union. Mr. Picotte, the head of the company on the Missouri, received us with singular politeness and cordiality. He forced me to accept his hospitality in the fort for three days; I profited by the delay to announce the word of God to a great number of Sioux and to baptize fifty of their small children. Mr. Picotte on his side had a larger, more comfortable boat built for me, which he filled with all kinds of provisions and even of sweet-meats. I can never sufficiently express my gratitude to him. May the Lord give him credit for his great charity toward me, and reward him some day as he deserves! I will add here, as a token of my sincere gratitude, that at all the American Company's trading-posts those gentlemen have shown me liberality, cordiality and charity far beyond my expectation or needs.

The Sioux tribe, in the midst of which I found myself at this time, is perhaps the largest of all the North American tribes.

It occupies a territory stretching from the St. Peter's river on the Mississippi to the Missouri, and thence to the sources of the two great branches of the Platte. Authors differ as to the number of the Sioux, but they are supposed to be from 60,000 to 80,000. They are divided into several tribes, all speaking the same tongue with slight differences. Such are the Brûlés, the Ogallalas, the Yanktons, the Yanktonnais, the Piankishaws, the Minneconjous, the Blackfoot Sioux, the Santees, the Broken Bows, the Assiniboins, the Hunkpapas, the Unkepatines [?], the Saoyns, etc.

The word Sioux is of Canadian origin; it is derived from the word *Soûl* or drunken. This name has been given them by reason of their passion for spirituous liquors and because of their propensity for intoxication. The name that they give themselves, and by which they are known among the other nations, is *Dacotha,* meaning cut-throat. A few missionaries would find a great deal of work here and would gather a fine harvest. The good savages never stopped giving me evidence of the lively desire that they feel to hear the word and embrace the religion of the Great Spirit.[5]

Fort Pierre is 1,500 miles from St. Louis; we left it on the 3d of November, rather late in the afternoon; but after going a few miles we perceived that our new skiff was leaking all over; we had to stop for repairs. We drew it ashore therefore opposite the company's great farm, on Fleury island. While my companions were working on the skiff, I made war on the chickens with great success; of course by the recommendation of Mr. Picotte. We soon left this island and its inhabitants, and went on and camped at the mouth of Chapelle creek.

It was stormy all day on the 4th; we had a head wind and could only advance slowly in consequence.

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[5] The word Sioux comes from an enigmatical name, said by some to mean "enemies" in some Chipewayan dialect, brought back by Nicolet from his travels of 1634-5, and by him spelled Naduesiu. "Dakota" is believed to mean "confederated." The motion of cutting the throat was, however, that by which the Sioux were designated in the sign language.

On the 5th I visited Fort Bouis and there baptized thirteen little half-breeds. The weather had cleared up, and we took advantage of a favorable wind to cover the entire Great Bend of the Missouri, which is thirty-six miles in length, whereas the tongue of land at its base is only three miles wide.

On the 6th I visited Mr. [Colin] Campbell at Fort Lookout, where a great number of Sioux were encamped. In their presence I baptized sixteen half-breed children; afterward I held a council with the principal chiefs and braves, to the number of about thirty. I gave them some details of the conversion of the Rocky Mountain tribes, and of my recent visit to the Blackfeet. "And you Sioux," I said finally, "would you receive a Black-robe who should come to live in your plains and dwell in the midst of you? Would your hearts open to his word? Would you willingly follow the trail that the son of the Master of Life, Jesus Christ, came to mark on earth, and in which he wishes to have all the nations walk? The Flatheads, the Kalispels, the Stietshoi, the Skoyelpi, the nations of New Caledonia have all received the word of God; they are walking the trail that leads to heaven! They have thrown aside all that is bad; they have buried the hatchet; they have forsaken drink, which makes the Sioux mad and unhappy; they have renounced thievery and depredations. Sioux, speak; I am listening. I will take your words to the great chiefs of the Black-robes (the Bishop and the Reverend Father General). Speak; if your words are good, I will plead your cause before them. I love you sincerely; I would like to see you happy, practicing and loving the Great Spirit's word. Speak the words of your hearts."

After a few minutes' consultation and the usual ceremonies of the calumet, the Great Orator rose, and having shaken hands with me and with all his companions as well, he said: "Black-robe, I speak in the name of the chiefs and braves; the words that you announce from the Master of Life are fair; we love them; we hear them to-day for the first time. Black-robe, you are only passing by our land; to-morrow we will hear your voice no more; we shall be, as we have always been, children who have no father to guide them, like the Wistonwish (prairie dogs) who have their lodges in the ground and know nothing. Black-robe, come and set up your lodge with ours; my heart tells me that you will be listened to. We are evil, we have bad hearts; but those who bring the good word have never got as far as to us. Come, then, Black-robe, and the Dacotha will listen to you, and our young men will learn to have sense."

Later that day I baptized four children of two Canadians married to Indian women, living nine miles from the fort.[6]

Nothing noteworthy occurred during the three following days. The forests of oak and poplar which adorn the banks increase in vigor and extent as we descend; game is rare; accordingly we only saw six lodges of Indians. On the 10th we passed the mouth of the river *L'eau qui court* [Niobrara]; it rises in a little lake at the foot of the Black Hills. The swiftness of its current earns it the name it bears. It is here, on the banks of this fair river two miles above its mouth and in the midst of the desert, that some hundred families belonging to the sect of Mormons have taken refuge, to find shelter from the unjust persecutions which other sectarians of the United States have made them suffer for several years past. Three times already their enemies have burned their homes and hunted them down like wild beasts.

On the 13th we came with a favorable wind to Fort Vermillion, 400 miles from Fort Pierre, where Mr. Hamilton liberally supplied us with provisions. Here I baptized seven half-breed children. On the 14th we saw a Mormon on the shore; but he fled at our approach. After that we met two Canadians, who had killed several fine wild turkeys, which they offered me; I gave them in return some coffee and sugar, very scarce articles in that country.

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[6] Here Father De Smet introduces, in his French version, the scalp story told by Rufus B. Sage in Chapter X of his *Life in the Rocky Mountains,* which he credits to "a recent traveler."

A simple grave, but remarkable for him whom it contains, appeared in sight on the 16th. It draws the attention of all travelers upon the Upper Missouri, and gives occasion for many cruel and terrible Indian anecdotes. It is the grave of Blackbird, head chief of the Omahas, renowned for the ascendancy which he had acquired over his tribe and the neighboring nations; but even more for the cruelties he practiced to reach the supreme power.[7]

On the 18th we found ourselves within view of the old Council Bluffs, which was once a great military post. Since my last voyage in 1842, the river has made considerable changes here, and has dug itself a new bed in various places. Council Bluffs, which was then on the edge of the river, is now more than three miles from it. During the day we saw the ruins of several old trading-houses. Not far from there, in a vast and beautiful plain, is a temporary establishment of the Mormons, driven out from their city of Nauvoo on the Mississippi; there are more than 10,000 of them here. I was introduced to their president, Mr. Young, an affable and very polite gentleman. He pressed me very earnestly to remain a few days, an invitation which my limited time did not permit me to accept. The unheard-of persecutions and atrocious sufferings endured by these unhappy people will furnish a sad page to the history of the great valley of the West. Sunset of this same day found me encamped in the upper Potawatomi country [at Sarpy's trading post]. There I met several of my old friends and neophytes, among them the chief Patakojec, who told me the long legend of the ideas and religious traditions of the Potawatomies. It shall furnish matter for my next letter.

The 20th, 21st and 22d were fine days. I visited my old friends in Bellevue, the good Mr. Papin and others. We passed the Papillon, Mosquito and Platte rivers and encamped near Table creek. Farther down we passed the Nishnabotna, the two Nodaways and the Tarkio. A range of hills, called the Blacksnakes, appear in sight soon after passing the mouth of the Tarkio. Several places are still pointed out which bear recent traces of bloody fights between the roving tribes of the region. King Hill, one of the highest of the chain, was the scene of their last grand battle; it is covered with human bones, and a line of mounds may be perceived in the form of ramparts and fortifications. On that occasion the whole tribe of the Blacksnakes was destroyed, and only the hills have transmitted their name and sorrows to posterity. The Sauks and Iowas succeeded to the Blacksnakes, and they have now ceded this fair and fertile portion of their territory to the United States. Eastward and at the foot of these hills stands the town of St. Joseph. We reached there on the 23d, and paid a visit to the respectable curate, Reverend Mr. Scanlan. In 1842 St. Joseph did not exist; there was only a single family there. To-day there are 350 houses, two churches, a city hall, and a jail; it is in the most prosperous condition. Its population is composed of Americans, French Creoles, Irish, and Germans.

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[7] Here Father De Smet repeats the story of Blackbird, as given in his letter of 1838. See *Lewis & Clark*, Aug. 10, 1804; *Long*, Vol. I, p. 204; *Catlin*, Vol. II, p. 5; *Astoria*, Chap. XVI; Cooke, *Scenes & Adv.*, Chap. XVIII.

On the 28th I arrived at Westport. Here ice began to run in the river and a great quantity of snow fell. I therefore had to take the stage to St. Louis, which place I reached on the 10th of December.[8]

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[8] Father De Smet disagrees with himself about the mode of conveyance from Westport to St. Louis, and the date of reaching the latter place. Both the English and French narrative of the journey say that he traveled by stage, the French account placing his arrival on December 10th. Both the manuscript itineraries — the English from the Linton Album and the French from Letter Book No. 4 — say that he [illegible]nt by steamboat, the French account stating that he took it at [illegible]venworth, that it was the last boat of the season, and that it arrived in St. Louis about December 1st.

PART IV.

THE GREAT COUNCIL OF 1851 AND PRECEDING EVENTS.

Itinerary from 1847 to 1851 inclusive.

1847.

FATHER DE SMET returned early in January from New Orleans — Was then sent to Europe on business of the Province — Traveled via Washington, Philadelphia, and New York — Crossed the Atlantic (sixth time) — Landed in Liverpool — Went to London and thence to Antwerp — Thence to Termonde — Visited Paris and returned to Belgium. No dates given.

Distance traveled, 7,705 miles.

1848.

Early in the year Father De Smet started on a tour of the principal cities of Holland and Belgium soliciting funds and enlisting recruits for the missions — Embarked at Ostend and crossed to England — Re-embarked at Liverpool and crossed the Atlantic (seventh time) to New York — Visited Washington and Albany, returning each time to New York — Went to St. Louis via Albany, Troy, Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Lake Erie to Sandusky, by rail to Cincinnati, by steamboat to St. Louis.

Under orders of his superior, Father De Smet left St. Louis about the middle of August for a tour of the Sioux country on missionary duty — Traveled by steamer to Council Bluffs — Thence by land to Fort Pierre, visiting the various tribes en route — Explored the Bad Lands of White river — Visited nearly all the Sioux tribes — About the end of October he took a skiff at the mouth of Little Medicine river and started for St. Louis — Forced by the ice to abandon boat about fifty miles above St. Joseph — Took wagon and overtook last steamboat of season between St. Joseph and Kansas City — Arrived in St. Louis late in December.

Few dates given.

Distance traveled, 9,772 miles.

1849.

Early in the spring Father De Smet, in the capacity of Socius, left on his inspection of the colleges at Louisville, Bardstown and Cincinnati.

After their return to St. Louis, they set out in August to visit several of the Indian missions — Ascended the Missouri to Westport — Thence overland via Fort Scott to the Osage Mission of St. Hieronimo on the Neosho river — Thence visited the Miami, Shawanoes and other tribes — "Followed for some time the great Santa Fe Route" on their way to St. Mary's Mission in the valley of the Kansas — Then returned to Westport and thence to St. Louis, visiting the various towns on the way.

Distance traveled, 2,766 miles.

1850.

Early in the spring Father De Smet went to Chicago and return on affairs of the Province — Then he visited, with the Father Provincial, their establishments at Louisville, Bardstown, Cincinnati and Chillicothe — "Toward the end of summer" Father De Smet and the Father Provincial went to New Orleans on business of the Society — Visited several places on the way — Visited Springhill College near Mobile, Alabama, and returned to New Orleans about the end of the year.

Distance traveled, 4,191 miles.

1851.

Returned with the Father Provincial from New Orleans to St. Louis in January.

"The Government having resolved to hold a grand council of all the tribes of the upper Missouri, the Father Provincial (F. Elet), at the urgent request of D. D. Mitchell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, sent Reverend Father Christian Hoeken and myself to join the expedition with a view of rendering any assistance in our power in furthering the views of the Government among the tribes with whom I had become acquainted. The opportunity, at the same time, was favorable to announce the consoling word of God to the poor benighted savages of these distant regions. On the 7th of June we left St. Louis on board the steamer *St. Ange,* bound for Fort Union near the mouth of the Yellowstone river."

June 10th cholera broke out on board and Father Hoeken died of it on the 19th, near the mouth of Little Sioux river, about half way between the modern Omaha and Sioux City — The boat stopped on its way among the several tribes to give Father De Smet an opportunity of consulting with them, and he made numerous horseback trips to their various camps — Arrived at Fort Union July 14th.

July 31st Father De Smet, accompanied by Major Culbertson and thirty-two Indian chiefs of the Assiniboin, Crow, Minnetaree and Aricara tribes, set out for the council ground on the Platte river near Fort Laramie — Crossed the high country west of the Yellowstone river to Fort Alexander on the left bank of this stream opposite the mouth of the Rosebud, where they arrived August 11th — Resumed their journey August 17th, crossed the Yellowstone and ascended the Rosebud to its source — Left the valley of the Rosebud August 22d and crossed over to the valley of the Tongue river — Left Tongue river next day and entered the watershed of Powder river in the valley of Piney Fork — Passed Lake De Smet (named on this occasion) on the 24th — Reached Powder river August 27th — Crossed the divide between the Powder and Platte rivers September 1st, and next day reached the Oregon and California road on the north bank of the Platte at the

Red Buttes — Arrived at Fort Laramie on September 10th, and at the council ground, "thirty-seven miles below Fort Laramie," at the mouth of Horse creek, on the 11th.

Here Father De Smet remained, assisting at the council, and giving religious instructions to the Indians, until September 24th, when he left for St. Louis in company with Messrs. D. D. Mitchell, Robert Campbell, Thomas Fitzpatrick and others — Traveled by the usual route to Fort Kearney, where they parted company, Father De Smet and Major Fitzpatrick, with a deputation of Indians, branching off to visit St. Mary's Mission on the Kansas river — October 15th Father De Smet reached Kansas City where he took steamer and reached St. Louis on the 21st of the same month.

Distance traveled, 5,457 miles.

CHAPTER I.[1]

EXPEDITION TO THE SIOUX — 1848.

The Sioux mission still under consideration — Nebraska vacant between the Platte and Niobrara — Hardships of land travel — Heat, insects, lack of water — Bad Lands — First meeting with the Poncas — The designs of Providence for America — Meets the Sioux at Fort Pierre — The Red Fish affair — Indians and idiots — Medals and medicine — Little encouragement for missionary work among the Sioux — Downstream in the fall by skiff, wagon and steamboat.

A TRANSIENT visit to some tribes of Sioux, on the upper Missouri, on my way back from the Rocky Mountains, [1846] left in me an ardent desire to see those poor Indians again. I was anxious to judge more maturely of their disposition, and ascertain with greater certainty what hopes might be entertained from the establishment of a mission among them. During the course of last summer, my superiors granted me this truly consoling privilege.

In order to reach their villages, I was obliged to ascend the Missouri as far as Bellevue (a village situated in the territory of the Otoes, 610 [665] miles from St. Louis), and then pursue my journey on horseback, over immense prairies, for about twenty-five days. An excursion through the magnificent plains of the great American desert, and, above all, in the vicinity of this noble river, which descends in innumerable torrents from the Rocky Mountains, offers undoubtedly many charms, and might afford material for descriptions replete with interest; but it would be a theme on which I have had predecessors, and, moreover, it would be giving the letters which I have the honor to address you an extent quite beyond what I dare assume. I will content myself with a sketch by Mr. Nicollet, my own experience enabling me to appreciate the exact fidelity of his picture.

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[1] This chapter comprises Letters II, III, IV and V of the *Western Missions and Missionaries*, which are Letters I, II, III and IV of the *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres*. The English text is mainly followed. The narrative of this expedition appears among Father De Smet's papers as a letter to an unnamed lady, written prior to January 1, 1849. It was published early in 1849 as a series of six letters to the Archbishop of Baltimore, in the *Baltimore Catholic Magazine*, and in July, 1850, in the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, as a series of four letters to the Central Council of Lyons and Paris and the Directors of the Work, dated St. Louis University, June, 1849. It was thus printed in the *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres* and thence translated for the *Western Missions and Missionaries*.

"Consider the boundless extent of a prairie — scan one by one its undulations, and borne as it were from wave to wave, from valley to hill-top, find yourself in presence of the limitless plain which is spread out before you; journey onward — hours, days and weeks will succeed each other, and emotions of ever-varying delight will captivate the mind, while the spectacle of inexhaustible wealth and new beauties will fascinate the eye. Without doubt there will be moments in which the ardors of a burning sun, and the privation of pure water capable of allaying thirst, will force you to remember that the best of earthly joys have their hidden thorn; but these trials are rare and brief. A gentle breeze almost continually refreshes the atmosphere in these vast plains, and the surface is so uniform as to baffle a surprise from the most crafty enemy. The route is one field of verdure, enameled with odoriferous wild-flowers, whose brilliant beauty has no witness but the azure firmament. It is particularly during summer that the aspect of the prairies breathes gayety, grace and life, and if there be any one moment in which they may excite all the sympathies of the traveler, it is when an Indian hunter, in pursuit of the deer or bison, animates this immense solitude with his presence and motions. I pity the man whose heart remains unaffected before so ravishing a spectacle!"

My land journey commenced at Bellevue, nine miles beyond the Nebraska or Platte river, thence to the mouth of the Niobrara or *L'Eau-qui-court*, ten days' march. We met not a single Indian, and no vestige of human habitation greeted the eye. But ever and anon we distinguished small artificial mounds, erected by the hand of man; irregular heaps of stones, and tombs containing the mortal remains of Indians, carefully wrapped in buffalo robes. At times a solitary post marked the spot where some brave had fallen in the field of battle — where reposed, perhaps, some ancient Nestor of the desert. These monuments, though with no epitaph to attest lofty deeds or transmit names to posterity, are a tribute of a feeling heart — a mute testimony of the respect the Indian bears to the memory of a father or a friend, and of the value he attaches to the glory of his ancestors. Some herds of bison and dense flocks of deer, of several species, that fled at our approach, alone beguiled the tedium of the march.

It is customary to encamp in places where the grass is fresh, which is generally on the border of a stream or pond of clear water. Care must also be taken for the safety of the horses during the night. To prevent all accident, they are hobbled — *enfargé,* as the Canadian voyagers say — that is, the two fore-legs are tied together, so as to prevent their straying too far from the camp. Two or three men remain on guard against any surprise from the Indians, too justly renowned as the most expert of horse-thieves. These sentinels also protect us against the bears and wolves which infest the wilderness, and incessantly prowl in the neighborhood of camps. Horses, on perceiving them, take fright and fly, unless the necessary precautions have been taken, and it sometimes happens that the most careful measures prove futile. Thus we, one day, lost a superb stallion of great value. Every evening he was tied to a post, with a long and heavy halter, but in a fright, caused by the approach of wolves, he darted forward with such velocity after the other horses as they rushed by him, that on reaching the end of his halter he broke his neck.

In so long a march, through regions so singularly various, two great inconveniences are sometimes experienced —

want of water and of wood. More than once we had no other fuel than the dry bison-dung, and three times at our camping ground water failed us. This is a hard trial for man and horse, especially after traveling all day under the burning sun of the month of August. Another kind of torment, still less supportable when the heat is most intense, is the appearance of fantastical rivers and lakes in the verge of the horizon, seeming to invite the weary traveler to advance and refresh his wasted strength upon their banks. Fatigue and thirst picture in the distance verdure, shade and coolness awaiting him. The illusion increases the desire of quenching your burning thirst. You hasten onward to reach the goal. Hour succeeds hour; the deceitful mirage heightens in brilliancy, and the panting, exhausted traveler presses on without a suspicion that the phantom flies before him. In an open, elevated region, where the atmosphere is in continual agitation, this effect may be easily produced by the reverberation of the sun's rays from the surface of these vast prairies, throwing the various tints of the verdure upon the deep blue of the firmament.

Besides the difficulties arising from the nature of the ground, there are others which summer always brings with its myriads of insects. Among these, the most to be dreaded is the *gad-fly*, the sting of which will make the gentlest horse bound with rage. Happily for the horse in these plains, Providence has bestowed upon him a defender as skilful as devoted; the starling, unalarmed by the presence of man, which, wheeling ever about the rider, lights on the back of the horse or on his load, to dart with wonderful skill upon the malicious insect which is about to attack his traveling companion.

For ourselves, we were obliged to wage continual war upon the swarms of mosquitoes and their allies the gnats. The latter teased us by day, the former, more cowardly, attacked us by night. These famished enemies, the product of the stagnant waters and decaying plants, at the approach of a convoy rush from their infected abodes, and accompany it with their plaintive buzzing, to the spot where the traveler seeks in vain a brief repose after the heat and hardships of the day. The winged tribe at once sound the trump of war, and darting on their tired victim, sting, harass and pursue him until they have assuaged their sanguinary fury, and obliged the unfortunate traveler, already sweltering with heat, to seek a stifling shelter under a buffalo robe or a thick blanket. One day I found myself the object of attack of a swarm of winged ants. They came upon me with such furious impetuosity that in a few seconds I was totally covered. Then I waved my handkerchief about my head, and soon got my horse to leave far behind us this phalanx of black insects, which filled a space of about a quarter of a mile.[2]

To those who pass their days amid the quiet of domestic joys, surrounded by all the delicacies that abundance can produce, a journey through the prairies may appear a sad realization of human misery and suffering; but to the man that elevates his thoughts above earthly and passing things, in order to devote himself to the many unfortunate souls who will love and serve the true God when they know him, such a one can perceive in these privations, in even greater perils and difficulties which may be encountered, only slight annoyances, which he will prefer to all the delights of indolence or the dangers of wealth. He has meditated the sublime words of our Lord: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away;" he recollects that a God become man—"although he was without sin bore the weight." His sufferings finally teach him that it is through tribulations and sacrifices that he can enter the kingdom of heaven and conduct thereto those who may desire to range themselves and die beneath the banner of the cross.

In my last letter I spoke of the annoyance resulting from the continual attacks and buzzing of the mosquitoes and

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[2] In the history of western explorations there is scarcely an explorer who has not left on record experiences like this.

brûlots. I must add to this harsh music the more fearful and more disagreeable noise of the rattlesnake. These reptiles are frequently met in the region styled *Mauvaises-Terres* or Bad Lands, a very remarkable plateau, of which I will hereafter give a description — and where the Little Missouri [Teton or Bad river], the Mankizita-Watpa or Terre-blanche, [White river] and the Niobrara take their rise. Here also are found the many-hued chameleon, the hideous lizard, the horned frog, known by the perhaps more classical name of salamander, and several varieties of small tortoise. I witnessed a singular trait of the instinct of a rattlesnake. The reptile was basking in the sun, surrounded by eight or ten little ones. As soon as she perceived me, she gave the rattle, opened her throat wide, and in an instant the whole brood descended. I withdrew some seconds, and then returned; the young ones had come forth from their living tomb, to which my presence quickly obliged them to seek refuge anew.

The unbroken, arid soil of the Bad Lands, which will ever baffle the most energetic and persevering labor, boasts, however, of several millions of townships, full of life and movement — I mean the villages of the prairie dog — the site of each one of which extends over an area of several square miles of smooth table land, on which the grass is very short and thin. The instincts of this remarkable animal (which bears some resemblance to the squirrel) are at once curious and amusing. The grass which springs up in the neighborhood of their dwellings they tear up by the roots; but their vandalism has its exceptions. They seem to respect and spare certain flowers which generally surround their little abodes, and give them a much more agreeable look. These proved to be the *Hedeoma hirta*, the *Solanom triflorum*, the *Lupinus pusillus*, the *Erigeron divaricatum, Dysodia chrysanthemoides, Ellisia nyctagenea,* and the *Panicum virgatum.*

They pile up the earth around their dwellings about two feet above the surface of the soil, thus protecting themselves against the inundations which, in the rainy seasons or at the melting of the snows, would engulf them and their little hopes. Guided by instinctive foresight, they carefully gather all the straws which are scattered over the plain and carry them into their subterraneous asylums, to protect them against the rigors of winter. At the approach of a horseman, alarm is rapidly communicated to all the citizens of this singular republic. All quit their habitations, and with head erect, the ears pricked up with anxiety, and a troubled stare, remain standing at the entrance of their abodes or at the opening of their conical hills. After a momentary silence, they break forth into one loud and repeated chorus of shrill barking. For some minutes life, motion and restless agitation reign throughout the extensive field they occupy; but at the first gun-shot all is tranquil, every animal disappearing like a flash. A kind of small owl and the rattlesnake appear to entertain amicable relations with the prairie-dog, and are commonly found at the entrance of their lodges, and in the general fight the three seek safety in the same asylum. The motives and nature of this singular sympathy are unknown. The wolf and the fox are their greatest enemies.

The Indian word Mankizita-Watpa, commonly translated White Earth river, signifies, more literally, Smoking Land river; and in this region there are incontestable and numerous indications that subterranean and volcanic fires have passed there. The water of the river is strongly impregnated with a whitish slime. We encamped on its shore. A heavy rain had recently washed all the ravines and dry beds of the rivulets and torrents, which are abundant throughout the Bad Lands, consequently the water was very similar to thin mud. What was to be done? We must either use this water to prepare our evening repast, or retire without tea or broth. This is no easy sacrifice in the desert, after riding on horseback for ten or eleven hours in the scorching sun. After many fruitless efforts to purify the water, we were obliged to use it as it was. Hunger and thirst make us less dainty. The mixture of mud, tea and sugar was, after all, palatable to our famished stomachs. We set out a pailful of this water to settle over night, and in the morning found it three-quarters full of pure mud. On the morrow we traveled all day and found a delicious spring, where we camped all night.

The Bad Lands, in the portions which are traversed by the Mankizita-Watpa, are the most extraordinary of any I have met in my journeys through the wilderness. The action of the rains, snow and winds upon the argillaceous soil is scarcely credible; and the combined influence of these elements renders it the theatre of most singular scenery. Viewed at a distance, these lands exhibit the appearance of extensive villages and ancient castles, but under forms so extraordinary, and so capricious a style of architecture, that we might consider them as appertaining to some new world, or ages far remote. Here a majestic Gothic tower, surrounded with turrets, rises in noble grandeur, and there enormous and lofty columns seem reared to support the vault of heaven. Farther on you may descry a fort beaten by the tempest and surrounded by mantellated walls; its hoary parapets appear to have endured, during many successive ages, the assaults of tempest, earthquake and thunder. Cupolas of colossal proportions, and pyramids which recall the gigantic labors of ancient Egypt, rise around. The atmospherical agents work upon them with such effect that probably two consecutive years do not pass without reforming or destroying these strange constructions. This clayey soil hardens easily in the sun, is of a grayish hue, or occasionally of a sparkling white; it is easily softened when mixed with water. The Mankizita-Watpa is the great drain of the streams of this country, and corresponds admirably to the name bestowed upon it by the Indians.

The industry of the settler will never succeed in cultivating and planting this fluctuating and sterile soil — no harvest ever crown his efforts. But though it offers no interest to the farmer, and little to the botanist, the geologist and naturalist may find abundant material for study and illustration; for here are found curious remains of the mastodon (the largest of known quadrupeds), mingled with those of the mountain-hare. I have seen well-preserved skulls, horns and tortoises, so large that two men could hardly raise them. All of these bore the distinct impress of their primitive nature.

It remains for me to give some details concerning the Indian tribes that I was able to visit. In none of my preceding voyages had I met the Poncas; this time I found the whole of this nation assembled at the mouth of the Niobrara — their favorite haunt during the fruit season and the gathering of the corn harvest. The manner in which they accosted my traveling companions augured little good, and was near being attended with disastrous consequences. It appears, indeed, that they meditated an attack upon the little troop of white men who, numbering but fifteen, escorted a wagon filled with merchandise for the Fur Company. They intended, at least, to pillage the convoy and kill one of the travelers, under pretext that he came from the country of the Pawnees, where one of their warriors had lost his life. I will present you here the laconic formula of reasoning of one of these barbarians, while in the act of taking aim at his victim. "My brother was killed by a Pawnee; thou art a notorious friend of the Pawnees! I must avenge his death, or recover the debt (value of his body) in horses or in blankets!" To this degree, unfortunately, has the idea of justice sunk in the Indian mind. Has an Indian fallen by the hand of a white man, every brave of that tribe considers himself justified in retaliating upon the first white man he chances to meet, without regard to his country or the part of the world from which he may come. I was in advance, but at the first signal of alarm I faced the point of danger. At once the air resounded with reiterated cries of "The Black-robe has come! The Black-robe has come!" Surprise and curiosity arrest the work of pillage. The chiefs ask an explanation, and order the spoilers to keep respectfully off, and restore what they had already stolen; then they press around me to shake hands (a ceremony somewhat lengthy, for they were about 600 in number), and conduct us in triumph to our encampment on the shore of the Niobrara. In my turn I made a little distribution of tobacco, which they appeared to appreciate more than anything else. The calumet is smoked in token of fraternal good feeling, and passed from mouth to mouth: they lavish upon me as well as upon my companions the most touching marks of kindness and respect. Such was the happy conclusion of a meeting which at first inspired us with such just fears. But the merciful views of Providence extended further.

They besought me to visit their village, four miles from our camp, in order to pass the night with them. I accepted the invitation the more willingly, as it would afford me an opportunity of announcing the truths of Faith. In fact I lost no time, and shortly after my arrival the whole tribe, numbering more than 1,000 persons, surrounded the "Black-robe." This was the first time that the Poncas had heard Jesus Christ preached by the mouth of his minister. The holy eagerness and attention which they lent to my words induced me to prolong my instructions until late in the night. The next day I baptized their little ones, and when the time of separation arrived they besought me with the greatest earnestness to renew my visit, and to fix my residence among them. "We will cheerfully listen to the Words of the Great Spirit," said they, "and submit to all his commands that you manifest to us." Until their wishes can be gratified, I considered myself happy to find among them a Catholic half-breed, tolerably well instructed in his religion, who promised me to serve as catechist.

This extraordinary attention on the part of the Indians, and their avidity to hear the Word of God, must appear surprising in a people which seems to unite all intellectual and moral miseries. But the Spirit of the Lord breathes where it will. His graces and his light prompt and aid men whom ignorance, rather than a perverse and disordered will, renders vicious. Moreover, that same Spirit which obliged the most rebellious to cry with St. Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" can also soften the most obdurate hearts, warm the coldest, and produce peace, justice and joy where before reigned iniquity, trouble and disorder. The great respect and the marked attention which the poor Indians testify on all occasions to the missionary who appears among them to announce the gospel, are a source of much consolation and encouragement to him. He discovers the finger of God in the spontaneous manifestations of good will offered by these poor creatures.

The language of the Poncas differs little from that of the Otoes, the Kansas and the Osages. Of intrepid and tried courage, they have, notwithstanding the paucity of their numbers, made themselves feared by their more numerous neighbors. They may with justice be styled the Flatheads of the Plains, on account of their bravery. Although attached by taste to the wandering life, they have begun to cultivate some fields of corn, of pumpkins and potatoes.[3]

Here, then, is a portion of the vineyard as yet untilled, but which only waits for a generous, charitable hand to cause it to yield fruits worthy of the dews of heaven. Can the Lord refuse his grace and his assistance to the apostolic man, who abandons all the advantages of civilized life in order to teach, in the midst of every species of privation, the salutary and consoling words of the gospel? When I reflect upon the hopes that may be justly entertained of the Indian tribes of the North and West of the United States, I cannot refrain from blessing the bounty and mercy of God, and trembling at the consideration of the terrible judgments of his justice. While Europe, shaken to the centre by the incessant efforts of learned impiety, appears to have strength or vigor only to shake off the divine yoke which the blood of Jesus Christ has rendered "sweet and easy," the forlorn inhabitant of the far-distant wilderness lifts his suppliant hands to heaven, and in all the sincerity of his heart asks to know the true Faith, and to be directed in the path of true happiness. While in the heart of Catholicity the priests of the Most High sink under oppression,[4] Providence, impenetrable in its views, is secretly preparing for them the vast solitudes of another hemisphere. There, perhaps, the Divine Master will fix his sanctuary, and choose to himself new worshippers whose simple hearts will offer him only an oblation of gratitude and love.

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[3] The later story of the Poncas the curious reader may find told in Mrs. Jackson's *A Century of Dishonor.*

It is time to pass to the Sioux, whose territory I reached a few days after my visit to the Poncas. Mr. [Colin] Campbell, one of the best interpreters in the country, generously offered to accompany me to the different tribes of this nation. His acquaintance with the country and the manners of the Indians, as well as the respect and friendship which the latter entertain for him, greatly facilitated my relations with them. I must also add, as a tribute of well-merited gratitude, that the officers of Fort Bouis and of Fort Pierre received me with the most delicate hospitality, and that the concurrence of their influence aided powerfully to render my intercourse with the savages easier and more profitable.

I have several times observed, in former letters, that the Indians inhabiting the valley of the Upper Missouri are generally more cruel than those sojourning west of the Rocky Mountains. Probably this arises from their almost incessant wars, which inflame them with a love of plunder and a thirst for vengeance. At the epoch of my visit to the Sioux, a troop of these barbarians were returning from a war against the Omahas, with thirty-two human scalps torn from defenseless old men, and from women and children whose husbands and fathers were off hunting. When they re-enter their villages, after the combat, it is their custom to attach these horrible trophies of their shameful victory to the points of their lances or to the bits of their horses. At the sight of these spoils the whole tribe shouts with joy, and every one considers it the highest gratification to assist at the Scalp Dance and Feast — which is celebrated amid the most discordant yells and fearful gestures. They plant a post daubed with vermilion in the midst of the camp; the warriors surround it, flourishing in their hands the bloody scalps which they have brought back from the field of battle; each one howls his war-song to the lugubrious tone of a large drum; then giving in turn his stroke of the tomahawk on the post, he proclaims the victims that his hatchet has immolated, and exhibits ostentatiously the scars of the wounds which he has received.

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[4] The allusion is to the revolutionary occurrences of 1848 in Rome, which compelled Pope Pius IX to take refuge in Gaeta.

See, in connection with the hint contained in this sentence, the anecdote of the Flathead chief, related on page 1341.

Such is, even at the present day, the degraded condition of the unfortunate Indian. They never take the field without endeavoring to draw down the favor of the Great Spirit, either by diabolical rites or by rigorous fasts, macerations, and other corporeal austerities. They even go so far as to cut off joints of the fingers and toes. Add to the thick shade of heathen darkness a shocking deprivation of manners, and you will have a faint idea of the lamentable position of these wretched tribes. Yet these same men welcomed me with open arms, as a messenger from the Great Spirit! A vivid emotion, depicted in every countenance, accompanied their respectful attention to my discourse, while I instructed them in the great truths of religion.

An event which occurred two days after my arrival at Fort Pierre, contributed much to augment their confidence in me. I give it as it occurred. The tribe of the Ogallalas had entered in a hostile manner on the lands of their neighbors, the Absarokas (or Crows), and had attacked them. The latter defended themselves bravely, routed their aggressors, and killed ten or twelve warriors. They had even employed a mode of repulsion which covered the tribe that experienced its effects with immortal disgrace: they pursued the Ogallalas with rods and clubs. This, according to them, signifies "that their adversaries were worth neither the lead nor powder that would be expended in killing them." So shameful a defeat discourages the Indian, and he no longer dares appear before such an enemy.

In this affair, the chief of the vanquished nation, named Red Fish, lost his daughter, who was carried off by the Crows into captivity. Melancholy and humbled, he deserted the wigwams of his tribe, which loss of honor and the death of so many of its warriors had overwhelmed with mourning and desolation. He presented himself at Fort Pierre on the morrow of my arrival. The object of his journey was to obtain the liberty of his daughter, through the mediation of the officers of the fort; he offered eighty fine buffalo robes and his best horses for her ransom. In his visit to me, grasping my hand firmly in his, with tears coursing down his cheeks, and heart-broken with grief, he thus addressed me, while sobs often interrupted his utterance: "Black-gown, I am a most unhappy father! I have lost my beloved daughter. Pity me, for I have learned that the medicine of the Black-gown (prayer) is powerful before the Great Spirit. Speak to the Master of Life in my favor, and I will still preserve hope of seeing my child."

To these few words, which the emotion of the aged man rendered singularly eloquent, I replied that I sympathized with his sorrow, but that he must himself prepare the way for the blessing of heaven — and that by virtuous deeds he might obtain from the Great Spirit the accomplishment of his desires. I added that without doubt the Master of Life had been offended by this unjust attack upon the Crows, of which he himself had been the chief instigator, in his position as Head Chief, and that to himself solely he must attribute the misfortune of his child and all the other miseries which had resulted from that expedition. I exhorted him to abandon in future all unprovoked attacks upon his neighbors, and to persuade his tribe to hearken to the orders of the Great Spirit, which I had come to announce to them.

I concluded by speaking to him of the mercy of God, who always hears the voice of the afflicted when they love and serve him. I also promised him the assistance of my prayers, and he on his part agreed to follow my counsels.

Red Fish returned soon after to his nation and collected all the principal chiefs, in order to communicate to them what had passed at the fort, and in particular his conversation with me, the Black-robe, concerning his daughter. At that very moment a cry of joy was heard in the extremity of the camp. They ran up from all sides to ask the cause; at length the good tidings are announced, that the captive daughter has escaped safe and sound from her enemies. The old chieftain scarcely dares to believe what he hears. He rises, and on leaving his cabin he has the unspeakable consolation of beholding once more his beloved child, whom Providence had restored. Imagine, if possible, his astonishment and delight, shared with him by his tribe. Every hand was lifted to heaven to thank the Great Spirit for the deliverance of the prisoner. The report flew quickly from village to village, and this coincidence, that divine Providence permitted for the good of the Ogallalas, was to them a certain proof of the great power of Christian prayer, and will, I hope, contribute to confirm these poor Indians in their good dispositions.[5]

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[5] The adventures of the daughter of Red Fish are thus related in a later letter, found in the third Belgian edition of Father De Smet's writings.—"From the time of her capture by the Crows, the girl had passed her nights with her hands and feet tied by leather straps to pegs, strongly driven in the ground. On the night following the mass offered at Fort Pierre, a *woman* untied her bonds, gave her a little bundle containing food and several pairs of moccasins, and told her in a low voice 'to get up and start out for her camp, where her father was waiting for her.' She traveled all that night. At daybreak, she hid in a hollow tree on the bank of a river. A few hours later a band of young warriors, following her trail, breathing vengence and uttering frightful yells, crossed the river precisely at the hollow tree. They looked in vain for the tracks of their destined victim on the farther bank, and finally returned to camp, much puzzled by the mysterious escape of the young enemy. When night

The number of half-breed and Indian children baptized among the Sioux amounts to several hundred. I conferred the same sacrament upon six adults far advanced in years, two of whom were over ninety, and dwelt in a little hut of buffalo skins, in which a poor fire with difficulty imparted a little warmth to their members, chilled and stiffened with age. They received me with great joy. I spoke to them of the Great Spirit, of the necessity of baptism, of the future life, of the blessed or miserable eternity which must follow this state of being. They listened with avidity to the instructions which I repeated during several days, and, in fine, received the sacrament of regeneration. They were never weary of telling me again and again that they had never ceased to love the Great Spirit, and that, being ignorant of more suitable prayers, they had daily offered him the first fruits of the calumet!

This recalls to my mind a fact, insignificant in itself, which nevertheless proved a source of genuine consolation to me. On my arrival in the nation of the Brûlés, I was singularly surprised to find myself followed by a youth about fifteen years of age, whom my presence seemed to afford a degree of pleasure which it would be difficult for me to describe. The little kind encouragement by which I responded to his manifestation of contentment, so effectually conciliated his affection for me, that the efforts and threats even of the savages who surrounded me could not remove him any length of time from my person. Scarcely had they taken him from my side by violence, when another path brought him back; he even penetrated into the grand council of the chiefs, in which the expeditious diplomacy of the Brûlés agitated the questions of which my arrival among them required a solution. Night came on, and terminating the deliberations of the assembly, obliged me to withdraw

came on the poor girl resumed her journey and walked several days and nights in succession with very little rest. At last she reached her father's camp, a few minutes after he arrived on his return from Fort Pierre."

from my new friend. His narrow and flattened brow, his silly stare and extraordinary gestures, gave me to understand that he was of the number of those beings whose want of reason is a safeguard against the loss of innocence, and I resolved to regenerate him on the morrow in the salutary waters of baptism. I therefore caused the whole tribe to be collected, and after giving them a clear explanation of the blessings of the sacrament that I was going to confer, I caused them to understand the happiness that was in reserve for all eternity to a being apparently so vile, and who had hitherto been only an object of their contempt, or at least of their compassion. These few words produced a profound impression upon my new auditory, and were followed by numerous petitions for the grace belonging to the Great Spirit, like my poor friend Paschal (this was the name of the little idiot), who is now treated with respect almost amounting to veneration throughout his whole tribe. But not being able to remain with them longer than a few days, I contented myself with baptizing a great number of their children; and giving the others a hope that later we would return and visit them, and that we could then instruct them and grant, in a more useful manner, the favor which they solicited.

There is a custom existing among the Indians which is excessively fatiguing to the stranger or to the missionary who visits one of their villages. As soon as he arrives, a succession of grand banquets is given in his honor, and Indian politeness exacts that he accept all these invitations — and the savage prepares without delay the best and most delicate that he has. The fat dog, which with them replaces the fatted calf, is the most acceptable dish, and is reserved for great occasions. After this succeed buffalo tongues, ribs, etc., etc., and a great variety of fruits, grain and roots.

In every camp which I visited I was conducted ceremoniously from banquet to banquet by the leading chiefs. Everywhere I was presented with a dish so filled with their delicacies that each portion would have sufficed me during several days. All must be consumed. This would be impossible were it not for the allowance of the blessed privilege of conducting one or two *eaters* with us. In some of the Sioux camps the guests are permitted just to touch the dish, and then take it home to their cabins.

In the various camps which I visited, I presented each one of the great chiefs with a medal of our Holy Father, Pope Pius IX. On this occasion I explained to them the high position of the Great Chief of all the Black-robes — the respect, the veneration and the love that all the nations faithful to the Great Spirit testify to his vicar on earth, etc., etc. They immediately brought the calumet, and after having offered it first to the Master of Life, imploring his blessing, the savages, in their engaging simplicity, presented it to his visible representative, entreating me to make known to him the esteem and love which they bear to him, and the ardent desire they entertain to listen to the Black-robes sent in his name.

When distributing medals to the Indians, these explanations become necessary; for, being naturally inclined to superstition, they often treat those objects with more than respect. A Sioux chief gave me a singular proof of this. While I was suspending the medal of Pius IX. to his neck, he testified an extraordinary joy and gratitude. "I will place it," said he, "with my War-Manitou; it will render me as prudent in councils during peace, as the other has rendered me strong in battle." I asked an explanation of these words. He at once opened a little box and drew forth from it a package, carefully wrapped up in buckskin. He unrolled it, and, to my great surprise, I saw a colored picture of General Diebitsch,[6] in full uniform and mounted on a beautiful war-horse. For years the Russian had been the Manitou of war to the Sioux chief; he invoked him and offered him his calumet, before all his enterprises against his enemies, and attributed to him the success of the many victories he had gained. I endeavored to disabuse the poor

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[6] A Russian officer who served in the Napoleonic wars.

Indian of his strange devotion, and have reason to hope that my efforts were not useless.

As stated already, I was sent to the Sioux tribes to sound their dispositions in a moral and religious point of view. The little account that I have the honor of presenting you discloses the result of my visit. What I have narrated touching these inhabitants of the desert offers little encouragement to the missionary. There is an immense difference between them and the Flatheads and numerous other nations that occupy the regions west of the Rocky Mountains. These first children of my apostolate have given me consolations that I should vainly seek among the Sioux. Would, then, a mission with the latter prove destitute of success? The little experience that I have been able to acquire, and my residence among them, inspire me to trust more confidently in him who holds in his hands the most obdurate hearts and the most refractory wills. I hope that in the course of this year something may be done in favor of these degraded Indians, so long left without the aid of religion. The same happiness will be granted to the Blackfeet, who already count 1,100 neophytes. The pious Associates of the Propagation of the Faith may contribute greatly to the accomplishment of this holy work by their fervent prayers.

I quitted the uplands of the Niobrara and the Mankizita toward the end of October, 1848, before the season of rain and snow. These places are the temporary abodes to which the different tribes of Sioux repair in autumn for the purpose of hunting the wild animals, which abound at that time, and thus providing themselves with hides and meat for the approaching winter. The consumption of skins in Missouri[7] must be immense, for all Indians use them for constructing their huts, as well as for the harness of their horses and their own clothing. Last year 110,000 buffalo robes, with skins of elk, gazelle, deer, bighorn, otter, beaver, etc., and 25,000 salted tongues, were received in the warehouses of St. Louis. This may give you an idea of the extraordinary number of buffaloes killed, and of the extent of the vast wilderness which furnishes pasturage to these animals.

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[7] Fr. dans le Missouri.

We set off in a skiff from Fort Bouis, which is near the mouth of the Little Medicine river. Our trip was delightful. The weather proved magnificent, and the two shores of the Missouri, teeming at this season with an extraordinary quantity of every species of game, offered the most graceful and varying spectacle, while it opened a vast field to the greediness and skill of our hunters.

At Council Bluffs, the sky, which had been hitherto clear and serene, suddenly changed, to give place to wind and tempest, and thick clouds of snow, which accompanied us during two days. We took refuge in a dense forest, in order to defend ourselves from the inclemency of the storm. The wild honey which we found there was our principal resource, one poplar alone, which we felled, furnishing us with more than we needed.

We made but little progress during ten days, on account of head winds, rain and snow. Before arriving at the mouth of the Big Tarkio, the Missouri was so covered with floating ice that, in our frail bark, we were exposed to the greatest danger, especially from the many sawyers with which the bed of the river is thickly set, and which discover or conceal their menacing heads on every side. These are trees, or trunks of trees, which the river uproots and washes from its banks, and whose roots get firmly fastened in the muddy bed of the river. As there are no dikes or embankments which can hinder the river from overflowing, it often happens that whole forests are uprooted and swallowed in its waves. These create great embarrassment and obstacles to its navigation.

Prudence forced us to abandon our boat. I therefore hired a farmer's wagon, which brought us safe and sound to St. Joseph, after a drive of two days through a great forest which skirts the Missouri. The steamer *Highland*

Mary, which I hoped to meet there, had departed on the eve of my arrival, and thus the opportunity of a prompt return to St. Louis appeared lost to me. I resolved, however, to exert myself to the utmost to overtake the boat: this to many would appear folly; the idea of running after a high-pressure steamboat certainly does appear quite ridiculous. But I relied upon the numerous delays of the boat at the different sand-banks, which were more likely to take place, also, as the season was advancing. I calculated well; in twenty-four hours I was on board at Fort Leavenworth.

For four months I had been night and day exposed to the open air, and, as in all my other excursions, with no bed but a buffalo robe. Yet my health had been uninterruptedly good, not even suffering from the slightest attack of cold; but scarcely was I subjected, for one day, to the heat of the stove in the cabin of the steamboat, when I was seized with a violent sore throat — it being my first indisposition through the whole of my long journey.

At length, after four months' absence, I arrived without other accident at the University of St. Louis, where, enjoying with my brethren the charms of the community life, I soon forgot the little fatigues of my expedition.

CHAPTER II.[1]

EN ROUTE TO THE GREAT COUNCIL.[2]

Up river with Christian Hoeken — High water — Cholera — Death of Father Hoeken — Beauties of the Upper Missouri — The Indian Question — Emptiness of the country — Smallpox among the Sioux — De Smet ministers to the victims — Cholera among the Aricaras — Remnant of the Mandan village — Fort Union.

St. Louis to Fort Union.

ON the 7th of June, [1851] accompanied by Father Christian Hoeken, I embarked at this place on board the steamer *St. Ange,*[3] to go to the Rocky Mountains. The boat ran to Fort Union, which is about three miles above the mouth of the river Yellowstone, on the northern side, and about 2,000 miles northwest of St. Louis. Several passengers, members of the American Fur Company, set out on the same occasion, intending to repair to the different trading posts established among the Indians of the upper Missouri. They took with them about eighty men; these were principally Canadians, some were Americans, some Irish, German, Swiss and Italians, and several "*Français de France,*" a title which is given them here to distinguish them from the Franco-Americans. They went in quest of earthly wealth; Father Hoeken and I in search of heavenly treasures — to the conquest of souls.

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[1] Comprises Letters II and III, Second Series, *Western Missions and Missionaries.*

[2] Father De Smet's original narrative of the Journey of 1851 was written in six parts in English, and completed prior to December 26, 1851. He then translated it into French (invoking the aid of his friend, Father Verhaegen, to purge it of "Anglicisms and Flandricisms") in the form of six letters addressed to Father Terwecoren, of Brussels, and dated between the 16th and 30th of January, 1852. The first three of these were transmitted to the Father General for his approval on February 10, 1852, and the remaining three on the 23d. The series appeared in the *Précis Historiques* and were afterwards published as Letters II to VII, Second Series of the *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres.* They were thence translated into English, and appear as Letters II to VII, Second Series, *Western Missions and Missionaries.* This English text is followed for the most part in the present work.

[3] The owner and master of the boat was the distinguished Missouri river pilot and navigator, Joseph La Barge. Captain La Barge was a dear and intimate friend of Father De Smet, and always lent the aid of his boats to the Catholic missionary enterprises. Captain La Barge was born in 1815 and died in 1899.

We had had a wet spring. Up to the moment of our departure the rain had been excessive; the snows and ice, which had collected in heaps during the rigorous season of the more northern regions, detaching themselves and dissolving, in a very short time swelled the thousand and thousand tributaries of the mighty Mississippi. These rivers, one after the other, precipitated their torrents into the "Father of Waters," and so swelled it that it overflowed, rolling its muddy billows from upland to upland, over a surface of eight, fifteen, and in several places of twenty miles in width. No longer knowing any bounds, the river, usually so grave and sublime, disappeared. Beneath its waters also vanished the verdure of the smiling plains, the stately forests and the varied spring flowers which so delight the eye of the traveler. A vast lake now covered all this space; and the immense volume of water, which went on continually enlarging, carried ruin and desolation among the numerous habitations which covered the lowlands on either shore. We could see the torrent descending with the violence and rapidity of an avalanche, overturning and sweeping everything with its angry waves.

In ordinary times, the sawyers and sand-banks are the principal obstacles to navigation in the western waters; they had now entirely disappeared, and gave the pilot no anxiety. But other dangers had taken their place; the whole face of the waters seemed covered with wrecks; houses, barns, stables, fences of fields and gardens, were borne away in confusion, with thousands of uprooted trees — wood piled on the shore and lumber-yards were all afloat. In the midst of these floating masses, whose dangerous contact we could not always avoid, the *St. Ange* used her whole power of steam to stem an almost irresistible current. Several times the boat was carried down; twice, especially, it was a regular contest between the river and the steamer. The latter, for a good quarter of an hour, lay as if motionless in the midst of the angry waters, but thanks to the quantity of tar and resin with which her furnaces were charged, she at last triumphed.

Amid such fearful dangers, the remembrance of the object of the missionary's voyage sustains and animates him; he knows that he is in the hands of him who can "command the winds and the sea," and that rarely has heaven permitted that a vessel bearing missionaries should perish.

The inundations of the rivers, the continual rains of spring and the sudden transitions from heat to cold are, in this climate, sure precursors of malignant fevers. The cholera appears to assume an epidemic type in these regions. Disease in many forms soon appeared on board the *St. Ange*. From the moment of its advent a mournful silence took the place of the rude shouts and boisterous conversations of our travelers. Six days had hardly elapsed from our departure, when the boat resembled a floating hospital. We were 500 miles from St. Louis when the cholera broke out in the steamer. On the tenth a clerk[4] of the American Fur Company, vigorous and in the prime of manhood, was suddenly seized with all the symptoms of cholera, and expired after a few hours' illness. The following days several others were attacked with the same malady, and in a short time thirteen fell victims to the epidemic.

A bilious attack confined me to my bed nearly ten days. Good Father Hoeken devoted himself to the sick night and day, with a zeal at once heroic and indefatigable. He visited them; he assisted them in their sufferings; he prepared and administered remedies; he rubbed the cholera patients with camphor; he heard the confessions of the dying, and lavished upon them the consolations of religion. He then went and blessed their graves on the bank of the river, and buried them with the prayers and ceremonies prescribed by the Roman ritual. This beloved brother had naturally a hardy constitution, and was habituated to a life of privation; but the journeys and continued labors of the mission among the Indians had greatly weakened it, and his assiduous and fatiguing attentions to the sick completely exhausted him. In vain I warned him, begging him to spare himself; his zeal silenced every other consideration; instead of taking precautions against exposure, he seemed to delight in it. It gave me pain to see him fulfilling this heroic work of charity alone; but I was in such a state of debility that I was incapable of offering him the least help. On the 18th, fears were entertained that my illness was assuming the form of cholera. I requested Father Hoeken to hear my confession and give me extreme unction, but at the very moment he was called to another sick person, who was in extremity. He replied, going, "I see no immediate danger for you: to-morrow we will see." He had assisted three dying ones that day. Alas! never shall I forget the scene that occurred some hours later. Father Hoeken's cabin was next to mine.

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[4] Lewis Willcocks, of New York.

Between one and two o'clock at night, when all on board were calm and silent, and the sick in their wakefulness heard naught but the sighs and moans of their fellow-sufferers, the voice of Father Hoeken was suddenly heard. He was calling me to his assistance. Awaking from a deep sleep, I recognized his voice, and dragged myself to his pillow. Ah me! I found him ill, and even in extremity. He asked me to hear his confession: I at once acquiesced in his desire. Dr. Evans, a physician of great experience and of remarkable charity, endeavored to relieve him, and watched by him, but his cares and remedies proved fruitless. I administered extreme unction: he responded to all the prayers with a self-possession and piety which increased the esteem that all on board had conceived for him. I could see him sinking. As I was myself in so alarming a state, and fearing that I might be taken away at any moment, and thus share his last abode in this land of pilgrimage and exile, I besought him to hear my confession, if he were yet capable of listening to me. I knelt, bathed in tears, by the dying couch of my brother in Christ — of my faithful friend — of my sole companion in the lonely desert. To him in his agony, I, sick and almost dying, made my confession. Strength forsook him: soon also he lost the power of speech, although he remained sensible to what was passing around him. Resigning myself to God's holy will, I recited the prayers of the agonizing with the formula of the plenary indulgence, which the Church grants at the hour of death. Father Hoeken, ripe for heaven, surrendered his pure soul into the hands of his Divine Redeemer on the 19th of June, 1851, twelve days after our departure from St. Louis. Who would then have foretold it? So ardent were his desires to labor for the glory of God, that he sighed for the wilderness — he thirsted for the salvation of souls! Alas! how many projects annihilated! In any other enterprise it would have proved sufficient motive for discontinuing a perilous journey; but the desire of procuring God's glory endows man with strength that nature denies him.

Father Christian Hoeken was born in Upper Brabant. He was only forty-three years old at his death. The last fifteen years of his life were passed among the Indians, who had conceived the most profound veneration for him. He was all to them — their father in Christ, their physician in illness, their counsel in difficulties, their sincere and faithful friend. When he could share anything with his poor neophytes, he rejoiced with all the simplicity of a child. His only consolation was to be among them. He was an active instrument in the hands of God to announce his holy word to thousands of pagans. The churches that he built and the fervent congregations of Indians that he collected and formed, attest his fervor and the apostolic zeal which animated him. His holy death crowned all his labors. A martyr of charity, he exercised his sacred ministry to his very agony. Sad, but salutary, will ever be the remembrance of that last solemn and affecting hour. What friends could ever offer or take a more touching or more religious farewell?

The passengers were deeply moved at the sight of the lifeless corpse of him who had so lately been "all to all," according to the language of the apostle. Their kind father quitted them at the moment in which his services seemed to be the most necessary. I shall always remember with deep gratitude the solicitude evinced by the passengers to the reverend father in his dying moments. My resolution not to leave the body of the pious missionary in the desert was unanimously approved. A decent coffin, very thick, and tarred within, was prepared to receive his mortal remains: a temporary grave was dug in a beautiful forest, in the vicinity of the mouth of the Little Sioux, and the burial was performed with all the ceremonies of the Church, in the evening of the 19th of June, all on board assisting.

About a month after, on her return, as the *St. Ange* passed near the venerated tomb, the coffin was exhumed, put on board of the boat, and transported to the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Florissant. There repose the mortal remains of Father Hoeken, with those of his brethren. His death, so precious in the sight of God, saddened the hearts of the passengers, but for many it was a salutary sorrow. A great number had not approached the tribunal of penance during long years; immediately after the funeral, they repaired one after another to my cabin to confess.

Five more passengers were also fatally attacked, but received before expiring the consolations of my ministry. The languor and weakness to which the fever had reduced me quitted me insensibly: after a lapse of some days I found myself perfectly recovered, so that I was able to celebrate mass on board and devote my whole time to the sick.

As the boat ascended the river and penetrated farther into the country, attaining the higher and more open portions of the Indian territory, the epidemic gradually disappeared. We could again give a little time to the contemplation of the beauties of the wilderness, to reflections on the future of these interesting solitudes — above all, of their poor, despised inhabitants. I will describe them in my future letters. They will inform you whatever striking or edifying events happened in my relations with the Indians during the long and dangerous journey which I have just terminated.

The mouth of the river Platte, or Nebraska, is the point of division between the Upper and Lower Missouri. To the early navigators on the river it was a kind of equinoctial, where, as at sea, the Neptunian tribute was exacted of all *pork-eaters* (*mangeurs de lard*), as all were styled who visited the desert for the first time. No one could escape.

The flat country or the valley of the Lower Missouri, is covered with dense forests extending from the bank of the river to the high hills that skirt it on either side at from four to six miles. The forests are successively replaced by flourishing cities, fine villages and thousands of beautiful farms. This alluvial soil is probably unequaled on the earth for the richness of some of its productions. The wood is in great demand. As the country is settled and trade becomes more important, steam-mills increase and prepare all kinds of timber and boards; the steamboats, too, consume immense quantities of wood.

Between the Nebraska and the Wasécha, or Vermillion, for about 400 miles the forests are vast and beautiful, often intersected by rich prairies of turf and verdure. This contrast delights the traveler. Every time he enters the desert he cannot refrain from admiring this succession of forests and plains, this series of hills which encircle them and present such a variety of forms,— here and there covered with trees and underwood of a thousand kinds, sometimes rising, bold, rugged cliffs, to the height of 100 or 200 feet, and then noble plains ascending gradually, with scattered groves, so pleasing to the sight that art seems to have crowned the work of Nature. We wonder that we do not see farms, barns and fences. Surely one just from Europe would think himself on the demesne of some great lord, and would be amazed at not seeing the mansion and its appurtenances.

Nature seems to have lavished its gifts on this region; and without being a prophet, I can predict a future far unlike the past for this desert. The words of the Psalmist will be soon applied — "The earth was created for the abode of man, and to manifest the glory and perfection of the Lord."

These plains, naturally so rich and verdant, seem to invite the husbandman to run the furrow, and promise an ample reward to the slightest toil. Heavy forests await the woodman, and rocks the stonecutter. The sound of the axe and hammer will echo in this wilderness; broad farms, with orchard and vineyard, alive with domestic animals and poultry, will cover these desert plains to provide for thick-coming cities, which will rise as if by enchantment with dome and tower, church and college, school and house, hospital and asylum.

I speak here principally of the region from the mouth of the river Kansas to that of the Niobrara or *Eau qui coule*,[5] and extending beyond the Black Hills, continuing along their crest to the Rocky Mountains, thence it follows southwardly the already existing limits of Utah, New Mexico and Texas. This region contains several large rivers, with numerous tributaries, the principal of which are the Platte, the two rivers just named, and the head waters of the Arkansas, Osage and Red. These present the greatest inducements to civilization.

Will not the President of the Republic, like some of his predecessors, pluck some plumes from the Indian eagle, once the emblem of their greatness and power, to place them in the crown composed of the trophies of his administration? In the limits which I trace he will find an extent of country vast enough to be represented by three or four stars more of the first magnitude, which will enhance the lustre of the galaxy of the flag of the Union. This great territory will hold an immense population, destined to form several great and flourishing states.

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[5] An interesting variation of the usual name, *Eau qui court*.

But then, what will become of the Indians, who have already come from afar to abide in this land? What will become of the aborigines, who have possessed it from time immemorial? This is indeed a thorny question, awakening gloomy ideas in the observer's mind, if he has followed the encroaching policy of the States in regard to the Indian. I have remarked with pleasure one ray of hope in the future for these poor and wretched tribes. They readily send their children to school; they make rapid progress in agriculture, and even in several of the most necessary mechanical arts; they carefully raise poultry and domestic animals. We may then hope that the sad remnant of these numerous nations, who once covered America, now reduced to earn their bread in the sweat of their brow (for they can no longer subsist by hunting), will find an asylum, a permanent abode, and will be incorporated with all the rights of citizens of the Union. It is their only remaining chance of well-being; humanity and justice seem to demand it for them. If they are again repelled and banished farther inland, they will perish infallibly. The Indians who refuse to submit or accept the definitive arrangement, alone favorable to them, would resume the wandering life of the plains, and close their sad existence as the bison and other animals on which they live, vanish.

In the neighborhood of the Mankizita, or White-earth river, the hills are blackened, and evidently owe this appearance to subterraneous fires. The soil is light and sterile for about a hundred miles; the high hills have little verdure, and the bottom or valley is very narrow. Some of the hills may even be called mountains.

The islands of the Missouri are, in general, well wooded, and present on all sides most agreeable views. On some is found the red cedar, the most durable wood of the country, lasting longer than any other when plunged in water or buried in earth. If we except the space between the Niobrara and Mankizita, where the low prairies are rare, and where the upland is almost entirely unwooded, this district has many fine sites, which seem to invite the pioneer and say "The time is not far off; here you will raise your cabin and till your field." Coal is also very abundant, and will supply the failure of the forests.

From the Mankizita to the great bend of the Missouri, and thence to Fort Mandan, and even about the mouth of the Yellowstone, on both banks, the country is very fine; the fertile soil gives most abundant crops. Here and there on the banks of the great rivers the forests are pretty fine, while in the upland plains, as you recede from the river, the country is destitute of trees and even of bushes.

In my visits to the Indian tribes, I have several times traversed the immense plains of the West. I have traveled over various sections, from the frontiers to the Pacific, and from the Hudson Bay territory, along the Saskatchewan and Athabasca, to Great Salt Lake, now the headquarters of the Mormons. Every time that I have traveled over these plains, I have found myself amid a painful void; Europe's thousands of poor, who cry for bread and wander without shelter or hope, often occur to my thoughts. "Unhappy poor," I often cry, "why are ye not here? Your industry and toil would end your sorrows. Here you might rear a smiling home, and reap in plenty the fruit of your toil." Yes, this void exists; and when I say it must be filled by an industrious and persevering population, I concur with the experience of all travelers.

It would be impossible for me to describe the sombre silence that reigns in this vast desert. You may pass weeks there, on the march, without meeting a living soul. And yet we become habituated to it — like it. Solitude seems to give scope to man's intellectual faculties; the mind seems more vigorous, the thought clearer. It has always seemed to me that when one travels over the plains, he feels more inclined to prayer, meditation, confidence in God, more disposed to resign himself into the hands of him who alone is our refuge amid perils, and who alone can provide for all our wants. Doubtless the removal of all bustle and business, the constant dangers to which we are exposed from wild animals and enemies, liable to be met at every step, contribute to this.

It has often been remarked that the songs of the birds are more sweet and agreeable here than in the forests of the east. This phenomenon is capriciously attributed to the effects of society. From the scarcity of wood, the birds are forced to perch on the same tree, or seek the same grove, and thus teach each other. It is commonly supposed that the birds in Europe are better singers than those in America: can this be attributed to any other cause than that just given?

If you would have an idea of the topography, vastness and extent of our western plains, imagine France, Germany, Belgium changed into one single prairie, along water-courses, and intersected here and there by a wood of small extent, or by a very small forest.

You will excuse these little digressions on the localities I have traversed. They will show, withal, to our unbelievers in Europe, that science and civilization may find their account in voyages undertaken for the good of souls and the glory of the Church. And then, too, all these fair and varied objects make us incessantly bless heaven and say, with the Psalmist, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."

At last we reached the Great Bend, where the boat came to land opposite a camp of Yanktons, a powerful tribe of the Sioux nation. As soon as these Indians perceived us, they broke out into cries of joy, and honored our arrival by several volleys of musketry. Their women had prepared a great quantity of dry wood; we accepted it thankfully, and they received in return a present of tobacco, lead, flour, coffee and sugar — the articles they prize most.

The Indians gave us the sad tidings of the ravages which the smallpox was then causing at Post Bouis and its neighborhood, near Little Medicine river, which empties into the Missouri at the upper bay of the Great Bend. This bend is thirty-six miles in circumference, while it is only four miles across by land. At my request the captain put me ashore, and two hours after I was among the sick. I baptized all the little children who had not yet been fortunate enough to receive that sacrament. I spent the night with them, giving them all the consolation in my power. Some believed that the disease resembled the great plague in London. The survivors long retained black spots. Even during this contagious disease, the Indians retained their old custom of giving a last abode to the dead by placing the body, wrapped in a blanket or buffalo-robe, on scaffolds raised eight or ten feet above the plain. They left them thus exposed to the burning heat of a July sun, the most intense of the year. The pestilential exhalations of these corpses infected the air for miles around.

They showed me in their camp a little orphan boy who had been attacked, and who, given up, had been turned out of the lodge in the midst of the night, during a fearful rain, by his adoptive father, a cruel and unfeeling man. He was still alive in the morning, when a Canadian perceived him, and, like the good Samaritan, carried him to his hut and lavished the most constant care on him. I had the pleasure to see him recovering, and to baptize him.

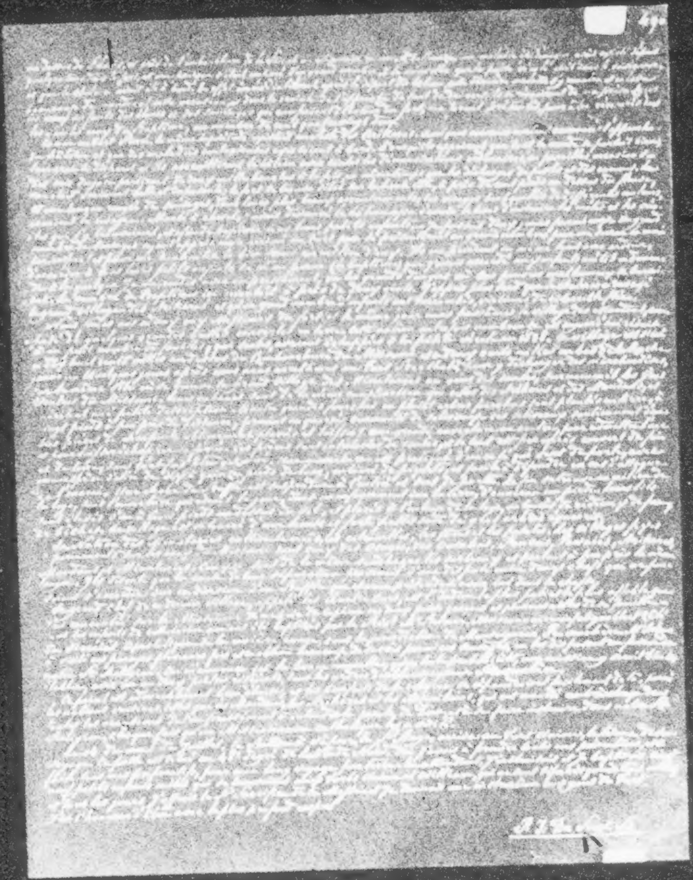
Some days after I was at Fort Pierre, situated on the shore, south of the Missouri, about 1,500 miles above St. Louis, and near the mouth of the Shicka, or Bad river. The influenza had existed for some time in the fort, and a panic had seized many at the news that the smallpox was in the neighborhood and the cholera on board. In fact, immediately after we started, the last broke out and carried off many. The Indians, awe-struck at the approach of danger from this implacable scourge, were overjoyed at my presence; the children of the whites and of the Indians encamped around the fort were presented to me, to the number of eighty-two,[6] to be regenerated in the holy waters of baptism.

The same inquietude reigned at the post of the Aricaras. Some couriers had announced the approach of the boat, and spread alarm by reporting that there were contagious diseases on board. But when the people saw that all were well, their fears vanished, and they welcomed the boat with the usual demonstrations on such occasions. Cries of joy burst from 2,000 mouths; volleys of cannon and musketry rolled echoing over the plains. The scene was beautiful and imposing. The fort stands on a high hill, nearly a hundred feet above the level of the river. A long row of Indians, in their gayest costumes, their faces daubed with various colors, lined the shore.

I had galloped on in advance of the boat, to have time to instruct the half-breeds and Canadians and baptize all their children. I spent two days among them. A great number of Indians, learning of my arrival at the fort, came to shake hands with me from respect, and to bid me welcome. At the same time they earnestly begged me to grant their little children the same benefit of baptism that I had granted the half-breed children. I yielded eagerly to their wishes, in consequence of the great danger in which they were. The number of baptisms was about 200. Not long after, I heard that the cholera had swept through the village of the Aricaras, and that many of the children had fallen victims. What a consolation, that by the sacrament I unlocked the gates of heaven to them!

We now bade farewell to the officers of the fort, to plunge farther into the desert. Ere long we passed the Mandan

[6] Fr. 182.



A PAGE FROM ONE OF THE LETTER BOOKS, REDUCED.

village, composed of large huts covered with earth. This once numerous nation is now reduced to a few families, the only survivors of the smallpox of 1838 [1837]. Their village lies 1,800 miles above the mouth of the Missouri, 200 below the mouth of the Yellowstone. Some days after, we stopped at Fort Berthold, to land some goods at the great village of the Minnetarees, or Osier tribe, nicknamed the Grosventres of the Missouri. Their cabins are built like those of the Aricaras and Mandans. Four forks, or rather four forked trees, set in the ground about twenty feet apart, form a square. These are joined on top by cross-pieces, over which other pieces are laid obliquely, leaving a great opening in the centre, to admit air and give vent to the smoke; these pieces are woven together with osiers: the whole is covered with hay and earth — not with turf, however. An opening is made on one side to receive the door, which consists of a bison-skin. Before the door is a sort of alley, ten or fifteen feet long, inclosed by pickets, and easily defended in case of attack. In the middle of the lodge, under the upper opening which admits the light, a hole about a foot deep is dug to answer as a fireplace. Around the lodge there are beds, one, two or three feet from the floor, with doe-skins as curtains. The whole village is surrounded by a high and strong palisade of large trees, squared.

The Minnetarees raise Indian-corn, squashes, beans and potatoes. The other permanent villages on the Missouri are those of the Osages, Omahas, Poncas, Pawnees, Aricaras and Mandans. The Minnetarees are of the same stock as the Crows, and speak about the same language. They say that they separated in consequence of a dispute between two chiefs, over a bison that both claimed to have killed on a hunt.

The great chief of the latter [Minnetaree] village, called Four Bears, is the most civil and affable Indian that I met on the Missouri. He begged me to baptize his two little boys and several members of his family. All the children of this tribe had been baptized by Reverend Mr. Belcour, a zealous and untiring missionary of the Vicariate Apostolic of Red River, which is under the jurisdiction of Monseigneur Provencher. Reverend Mr. Belcour has visited these tribes several times, and met with great success in disposing them in favor of our holy religion. I learned, to my consolation, that in all probability a mission would be soon established there, with one or two resident priests, under the direction of Monseigneur Provencher.[7]

The place is admirably well chosen, and the benefits of religion will easily spread thence among the neighboring nations, such as the Mandans, Aricaras and Assiniboins. These tribes evince great eagerness to hear the word of God and to be instructed in our holy faith, whenever a Catholic missionary visits them. In Europe, the preachers and catechists must use a thousand means to win auditors; here men call priests to instruct them. They are eager for this nourishment of the soul, this word of God, that so many others despise! What an awful account of this heavenly benefit must be one day rendered by men of all ages, especially the young, for whom religious teaching abounds in the churches, colleges and schools of Europe!

On the 14th of July, the steamboat *St. Ange* reached our destination, Fort Union. This post is situated at 48° North laitude. I had then to make all my preparations and take all my precautions for my long journey on land. Yet, withal, I found time to instruct and baptize twenty-nine little children, between Fort Union and Fort William, which are only three miles apart. I said mass daily at the fort, and gave an instruction.

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[7] Bishop Provencher died in 1853, after thirty-five years spent in the Red River country.

CHAPTER III.[1]

EN ROUTE TO THE GREAT COUNCIL.

Friendly aid from Culbertson — Starts on 800-mile journey across country — No perceptible trail — Storms and mosquitoes — Skunk-meat — Volcanic country — The plains appetite — Geologic curiosities — Colter's Hell — Bridger's tale of the Yellowstone Park — De Smet's cure for snake-bites — Fort Alexander and the Rosebud — Signs of enemies — Lack of water — Lake De Smet — Misled by straggling Crows — The great Oregon Trail — Fort Laramie — Campbell and Mitchell — Ten thousand Indians assembled.

Fort Union to Fort Laramie.

THE whole forenoon of the 31st of July, the day on which the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Ignatius, founder of the Society of Jesus, was employed in making preparations for our journey into the interior of the country. Mr. [Alexander] Culbertson,[2] superintendent of the forts on the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers, is a distinguished man, endowed with a mild, benevolent and charitable temper, though if need be intrepid and courageous. He has always given me marks of kindness and friendship, but most particularly in this last tour. Being at the head of our troop, he was able to aid me in my project.

We numbered thirty-two persons; the greater part were Assiniboins, Minnetarees and Crows, who were repairing to the great Indian council to be held in the vicinity of Fort

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[1] Comprises Letters IV and V, Second Series, *Western Missions and Missionaries.*

[2] Alexander Culbertson, next to Kenneth McKenzie, the most important of the American Fur Company traders on the Missouri. His principal activities were at Fort Union and at the trading posts at the head of navigation from which finally came Fort Benton. He was born in May, 1809, and died at Orleans, Mo., August 27, 1879.—*American Fur Trade of the Far West*, p. 388.

Laramie, and by the same route that we had chosen, which was scarcely less than 800 miles in length. Two four-wheeled wagons and two carts, for transporting our provisions and our baggage, composed our whole convoy. The four vehicles were in all probability the first that had ever crossed this unoccupied waste. There is not the slightest perceptible vestige of a beaten track between Fort Union and the Red Buttes, which are on the route to Oregon, and 161 miles west of Fort Laramie.

Having dined, we crossed the river with our baggage. Following the course of one of the little tributaries of the Yellowstone, we advanced about six miles. We had with us a skillful hunter of the Blackfeet tribe, and he made a happy commencement by bringing us two fine deer as the first fruits of his ability. The mosquitoes attacked us on all sides, leaving us no repose. We were forced to combat them continually with branches, handkerchiefs and smoke. The last is the most efficacious weapon for dissipating these sanguinary insects, but it is at the same time the most difficult for the traveler to support. Night came on, and brought with it a terrible storm. The thunder rolled above our heads and the clouds discharged torrents of water.

On the 1st of August, at six o'clock in the morning, we resumed our route. We took all possible precaution to avoid meeting any hostile band. The Indians who accompanied us kept their eyes on the earth to discover any recent tracks of an enemy. An extraordinary experience gives them an admirable tact in detecting trails which are imperceptible to others. The foes that our traveling companions dreaded most in the section we were about to traverse, were the Blackfeet and the Sioux. After breakfasting in the neighborhood of the source of the Fox river, we journeyed from morning till night over hilly and undulating plains, bounded by ranges of hills which stretch from the Yellowstone to the Missouri.

From time to time we descried promontories in the distance, which serve as guides to the traveler. At the close of the day we pitched our camp at the base of the Tetons of the Yellowstone. These Tetons derive their name from a group of lofty hills situated in one of those delightful valleys which are numerous in these parts, and which, being surrounded by trees and shrubbery of various kinds, form a most agreeable contrast to the plains that we had just left behind, so destitute of wood and water. Wild fruit, such as plums, cherries, gooseberries, service-berries, buffalo-berries, or *Shepherdia angelica,* abound. Among the vegetables and roots we noticed the *Psoralea esculenta,* or breadroot; its white apple and its charming white, oval blossom, nearly three inches in circumference, are universally found in this uncultivated solitude, and would deserve a place in a garden of choice plants; the savages value it highly. The wild onion and the sweet onion bear handsome flowers; these plants would undoubtedly improve with culture. The roots of the water-arrow (*Sagittaria rigida*), and those of the wild Lily of the Valley (*Convallaria borealis*), are equally prized by the Indians, who call them *Swan potatoes.* The earth pea and bean are also delicious and nourishing roots, found commonly in low and alluvial lands. The above-named roots form a considerable portion of the sustenance of these Indians during winter. They seek them in the places where the mice and other little animals, in particular the ground-squirrel, have piled them in heaps.

The mosquitoes tormented us greatly during the day. They especially worried our horses and mules, which were literally covered with them. For us, we had taken measures against their attacks by wearing big gloves in spite of the heat, and covering our heads with sacks formed of coarse gauze.

The distance between the Tetons and Fort Union is about thirty miles. We saw very few deer; from time to time an antelope or buck was roused from repose and fled at our approach. Traces of several kinds of bear, especially the grizzly bear, are very common; the latter are found in the woody places and along the streams and rivulets. We succeeded in killing three, not without great effort and danger. Our hunter brought us two fine fat antelopes, which were soon dressed and served up for our supper. One of the Indians killed a skunk (*Mephitis Americana*). The strong odor of this animal is intolerable to the whites; the savages, on the contrary, appear to like it, and deem its flesh exquisite. How true is the proverb: *De gustibus non disputandum!* — there is no accounting for tastes.[3]

On the 2d of August we set out at break of day, and were fanned by a refreshing breeze. The country through which we progressed was full of interest: the valleys were covered with a luxuriant verdure, intermingled with flowers of various hues. Groves of cottonwood, elm and ash, as well as groups of service-trees and cherry-trees, offered themselves along the beds of dry rivers and streamlets. We ascended step by step the hills which separate the waters of the Missouri from those of the Yellowstone, like so many insuperable barriers furrowed with profound ravines. We triumphed over these obstacles with great difficulty, and at length attained the summit of the hills. There a most magnificent spectacle unrolled itself before our eyes. Nature has accumulated in this spot a great variety of her most fantastical caprices. On one side is displayed a succession of beautiful prairies, here and there interrupted with groves of stunted trees and shrubs, terminating in verdant hills dotted with groups of cedar and pine; on the other are shapeless heaps of red and white clay and piles of stones, which, viewed at a distance, resemble brick-kilns, from their peculiar color: although thrown together without any apparent order, they add much interest to the landscape.

The region through which we passed for several days furnished evident proofs that it has been strongly volcanic, even at a very recent date, for the surface is still covered with lava and scoriæ. I counted as many as seventy conical hills, from 20 to 150 feet in height, grouped in one single plain and in the space of from four to five miles: they had evidently gone through the ordeal of fire. Some of these hills were composed of cinders that the earth in her fiery convulsions appeared to have vomited from her center. Several times, after having gained some miles on the heights, we found ourselves suddenly facing an almost perpendicular descent, formed of rock and white clay, down which we had to let our vehicles by hand. We then entered into a chain of valleys and fertile prairies watered by springs and rivulets, and embellished with the cottonwood, elm, ash, cedar and pine; in other places the summits of the hills are remarkable for their beauty, and the rich undulating plains for their abundant verdure.

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[3] Father De Smet's usual charitable spirit toward novel articles of food deserts him when he comes to the flesh of the skunk. Yet there seems to be no doubt that it is sweet and wholesome meat and that it was often used. Among early travelers who make mention of it are Bradbury, Long, Gregg, Irving and Fremont.

On the fourth day of our march we descried thousands of buffalo; the whole space between the Missouri and the Yellowstone was covered as far as the eye could reach. Hitherto the mosquitoes had greatly tormented us, but now they entirely vanished. We sought the cause of this phenomenon. The Indians told us that the absence of our winged enemies was owing to the prodigious number of buffalo which were grazing in the neighboring plains, and which attracted these insects. In fact, we saw these noble animals throwing the earth on their bodies by means of their horns and feet, or rolling themselves in the sand and dust, and thus filling the air with clouds, in the endeavor to rid themselves of their vexatious followers. The lot of these animals appeared bad enough, for they were pursued day and night. During a whole week we heard their bellowings like the noise of distant thunder, or like the murmurs of the ocean waves beating against the shore. It may be said that it is the country in which the buffalo and herds of deer are generally found in the greatest abundance. A good hunter might easily kill here, in the course of a day, several cows, deer, a mountain-goat, a red-tailed and a black-tailed buck, an antelope, hares and rabbits. He might fire twice upon a grizzly bear, and perhaps meet a gray and a silver fox. To this list of animals we may add the beaver, otter, badger, prairie-dog, and several kinds of wild fowl, principally pheasants and grouse. It is easy to see that our hunters could take their choice. In truth, we regaled ourselves with what was most delicate, and left a great quantity of flesh in the plains for the benefit of the vultures [turkey-buzzards] and wolves, whose howlings and rejoicings already resounded on every side.

An Assiniboin gave us a singular proof of his dexterity in the chase; I cannot forbear mentioning it. Alone and on foot, he stealthily approached a large herd of buffalo cows. As soon as he was near enough to them to allow of their hearing him, he began to imitate the cry of a young calf. At once the cows ran toward the place of concealment of the ingenious hunter, and he killed one of them. The troop, alarmed, withdrew hastily and in great disorder. He reloaded his rifle and renewed his cry; the cows stopped, returned as if by enchantment, and he killed a second. The Assiniboin assured us that he could easily have taken more by the same stratagem, but thinking two cows were enough for us, he suffered the rest to go.

Travelers in these upper regions enjoy an excellent appetite. I have been more than once astonished at the enormous quantity of meat that a man is capable of consuming without injury to his health; it would hardly be credited in Europe. One and even two buffalo tongues, a side of venison or other meat, and some additional trifles, are not considered a large portion for one meal.

On the 7th of August we crossed lands intersected with numerous ravines and dried streams. The soil was much lighter than that we last trod; it was covered with a species of wild artemisia, or wormwood — an infallible mark of sterility. The aspect of all the ravines, shores and beds of rivers and streams, as well as that of every eminence, proves that there are numerous veins of mineral coal in this section. The observations that I made on the quality of the soil induce me to believe that these deposits of coal extend as far as the numerous coal mines which exist in the territories watered by the Saskatchewan and Athabasca lake, of which I have already spoken, in my letters in 1845 and 1846, after traveling over those places.

Evident tokens convince the traveler that the immense plains that he is crossing, and on which not even a shrub grows, have not always been destitute of wood. Petrified trunks and entire trees frequently meet the eye. Astonishment and admiration seize the mind, and excite conjectures concerning the manner in which these changes have been wrought. But what answer offer to the question, "Why are not these lands wooded as they must have been in former times?" The steppes of Asia, the pampas of South America and the western prairies of this hemisphere, seem to posses a common and uniform character; generally speaking, they have neither trees nor shrubs on them. Some observers attribute it to the action of frequent fires which have passed over these localities; others to the change undergone in the climate, or to the natural sterility of the soil; and there are some who pretend that some operation or convulsion of nature has destroyed the forests which formerly existed here, and has reduced them to their present condition. I have examined different localities; and the enormous heaps of shells of the testaceous kind and of the genus muscula, which I found a few feet from the summits of the loftiest hills, and which were incorporated in alluvial earth and mingled with sand and water-worn pebbles, convince me that this portion of land has undergone changes as great as they are amazing.

On the same day we traversed a mountainous elevation which stretches as far as the Owl-head Buttes. These buttes or mounds, in this ocean-like prairie, serve as guides to the warrior, the traveler and the hunter, who can perceive them thirty miles off. From the summit of this extensive eminence we contemplated, with pleasing wonder, the White Earth country, or clay plains of the Yellowstone. From south to north they measure from thirty to forty miles. When on this height, the imagination discovers ruins of ancient villages, and one seems to see confused rows of broken columns, forts with their turrets and bastions, towers, domes, walls in decay, castles and edifices of every sort. Some of these pillars of red and white hardened clay rise to an elevation of from 50 to 100 feet. It would have gratified me much to have passed one or two days in an attentive examination of these volcanic productions. I presume that the soil is not unlike that near the White Earth river, a tributary of the Missouri, and that it contains the same species of interesting fossils.

Similar tracts, which have ceased to be volcanic, are found in the environs of the superior sources of the rivers Arkansas, Platte, etc., and of the Big Horn, a branch of the Yellowstone. Near the source of the river Puante [Stinking Water, now called Shoshone] which empties into the Big Horn, and the sulphurous waters of which have probably the same medicinal qualities as the celebrated Blue Lick Springs of Kentucky, is a place called Colter's Hell — from a beaver hunter of that name.[4] This locality is often agitated with subterranean fires. The sulphurous gases which escape in great volumes from the burning soil infect the atmosphere for several miles, and render the earth so barren that even the wild wormwood cannot grow on it. The beaver hunters have assured me that the frequent underground noises and explosions are frightful.

However, I think that the most extraordinary spot in this respect, and perhaps the most marvelous of all the northern half of this continent, is in the very heart of the

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[4] For John Colter, a soldier of the Lewis and Clark expedition, who discovered this spring in 1807, and passed across the Yellowstone Park country in the same year, being the first white man to enter that region. For a full account of his adventures, see *The Yellowstone National Park*, edition of 1903.

Rocky Mountains, between the forty-third and forty-fifth degrees of latitude and 109th and 111th degrees of longitude, that is, between the sources of the Madison and Yellowstone. It reaches more than a hundred miles. Bituminous, sulphurous and boiling springs are very numerous in it. The hot springs contain a large quantity of calcareous matter, and form hills more or less elevated, which resemble in their nature, perhaps, if not in their extent, the famous springs of Pambuk Kalessi, in Asia Minor, so well described by Chandler.[5] The earth is thrown up very high, and the influence of the elements causes it to take the most varied and the most fantastic shapes. Gas, vapor and smoke are continually escaping by a thousand openings, from the base to the summit of the volcanic pile; the noise at times resembles the steam let off by a boat. Strong subterranean explosions occur, like those in "Colter's Hell." The hunters and the Indians speak of it with a superstitious fear, and consider it the abode of evil spirits, that is to say, a kind of hell. Indians seldom approach it without offering some sacrifice, or at least without presenting the calumet of peace to the turbulent spirits, that they may be propitious. They declare that the subterranean noises proceed from the forging of warlike weapons: each eruption of earth is, in their eyes, the result of a combat between the infernal spirits, and becomes the monument of a new victory or calamity.

Near Gardiner river, a tributary of the Yellowstone, and in the vicinity of the region I have just been describing, there is a mountain of sulphur. I have this report from Captain Bridger,[6] who is familiar with every one of these mountains, having passed thirty years of his life near them.[7]

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[5] Richard Chandler, English archæologist, 1738–1810.

[6] James Bridger, 1804–1881, "the ablest hunter, mountaineer and guide of the West," went to the Indian country in 1822, founded Fort Bridger in 1843; his vast special knowledge made him invaluable in later years to the Government and in railroad surveys.—*American Fur Trade of the Far West.*

[7] This is one of the most complete and interesting early references

From the Owl Buttes, where we encamped on the 7th of August, to the source of the Immel, a distance of about thirty-six miles, we traveled on the highlands. The surface was rugged, cut by deep ravines, and excessively difficult to pass with our vehicles. At every step we met volcanic remains. For two days our route offered on the right and left burnt hills, some of which were covered with lava and scoriæ and had evidently been craters, whence volcanic matter had been ejected into the neighboring plain.

At the decline of the same day we were witnesses of a singularly beautiful phenomenon. The moon was surrounded by four circles; the first was of a beautiful azure, the second a rich purple, and the third white, while the fourth was obscure or black. In the midst of all these circles the queen of night shone brilliantly. The savages au-

to the Yellowstone Park country extant. As is well known, the country around the sources of the Yellowstone was practically a *terra incognita* until 1870. The researches of later years have discovered several accounts of early visits by the traders and trappers, but nowhere is there anything more complete than this of Father De Smet. It would indeed have been fortunate if the park had been set apart on the lines he describes rather than as it was, for it would then have embraced much territory, particularly the Jackson Hole country, which, it is generally conceded, should have been a part of the park, and which is now largely included in recent forest reservations. This territory contains the sources of the three great river systems of the western portion of the United States — the Missouri, with its great tributary, the Yellowstone; the great tributary of the Columbia, the Snake river; and Green river, the principal tributary of the Colorado of the West. In a scrap-book containing a large number of manuscript maps prepared by Father De Smet during his travels, are four maps that embrace the sources of the Yellowstone. From these maps are taken the following names of features now familiar to every visitor to the Park: Gardiner river, Mammoth Hot Springs, Yellowstone lake, Yellowstone falls, noted as 290 feet high, with an outline of the Grand Cañon below them, Firehole river, the various hot spring districts, Jackson lake, the Teton mountains, Two-ocean Pass, Atlantic and Pacific creeks, and "Colter's Hell." On one of the maps occurs the following notation: "Great volcanic region about 100 miles in extent now in a state of eruption."

gured from this sign that some hostile band was near, and passed the whole night under arms, watching.

On the 10th we quitted the highlands and advanced about twenty miles, over a barren, rugged space, excavated by rains. A kind of salamander, vulgarly called horned frog, lizards and rattlesnakes, were most abundant. I give you the information I gathered from the Indians concerning the antidotes they employ for curing the bite of the last-named reptile. Blackroot (*Pterocaulon*)[8] is regarded by them as a sovereign remedy against the wound inflicted by this most venomous serpent, and Providence has rendered it very plentiful precisely in those places in which these snakes are found. The remedy is truly side by side with the ill — for it is sufficient to chew the weed and apply it to the wound, when the swelling is arrested and disappears. When an Indian, his horse or his dog, has been bitten by one of these serpents, they pursue the reptile, which dies almost directly after having given its bite. They open its stomach, take out the blood that it has swallowed and apply it to the wound; the swelling subsides at once, and the dangerous effects of the poison are prevented. When the swelling is considerable, the Indians use the sharp bones and the teeth of the rattlesnake to pick and open the swollen skin, and by this means they dissipate or remove the inflammation. The copperhead snake has a poison so subtle that its breath alone causes death to him who inhales it. Its tongue is not forked like that of other snakes; it is of a triangular shape. When the reptile is startled and provoked, his head flattens and he throws from his mouth a great quantity of yellow poison, and then blows till he expires.

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[8] The editors have been unable to identify Father De Smet's "blackroot." In his first draft of this letter, the apparently scientific name given in the text does not appear; it was perhaps furnished him afterward by some friend better posted in botany than himself, but a somewhat extensive search has failed to reveal any better clew to "pterocaulon" than to "blackroot." Major E. A. Mearns, U. S. A., who is exceptionally well acquainted with the flora of the northwest, suggests that it may be Culver's Physic — *leptandra virginica*. Maximilian of Wied speaks of a blackroot or snakeroot, *galardia bicolor*. Father De Smet's account of the plant and its virtues seems to have aroused some interest in Europe, and his letter-books contain several requests to missionaries in the Indian country, to procure seeds or roots of it for transmission thither; but no mention has been noticed of any having been furnished. In a letter to the gentlemen of the Propagation of the Faith at Lyons, in January, 1852, the following further information is given: "I will tell you what I know about the Racine-noire, to which you allude in your letter, and of which the savages make use with entire success. I have found this root throughout the desert, from the States to the Rocky Mountains. The plant has a very handsome flower, red and purple, which may be classed with the little Tournesols (Genus *Cistus*). It stands one to two feet above the soil; it has a long, slender, fibrous and blackish root. All that is needful is to chew the root (either fresh or dried) with the teeth, and to apply the saliva to the part bitten by the reptile. Immediately the subtle poison loses its force and the inflammation stops and subsides. Eye witnesses have assured me that they have seen the Indian jugglers play with and caress rattlesnakes with impunity, which they attributed to the blackroot, which stupefies the reptile and deprives it of the power to bite; the juggler holds the root in his hand, or rubs his hands with its juice, before going to work on the snake."

On the 11th we arrived at the upper portion of a gently sloping plain. Having crossed it, we found ourselves at Fort Alexander, situated on the banks of the Yellowstone, and at a short distance from the little river Rosebud. Fort Alexander is about 200 miles distant from Fort Union, along the dividing ridge. The winter, it is said, is extremely severe in these regions, commencing in November, and only terminating in the month of April.

After remaining six days at Fort Alexander, allowing our animals time to repose, and also awaiting the arrival of a barge belonging to the American Fur Company, which was freighted with some of our effects, we passed over the Yellowstone on the 17th of August, at about two o'clock. We passed over a high and very level plain: for a distance of five miles the soil is light, sandy and entirely covered with "green toads," as the *voyageurs* call different kinds of cactus — plants that are noted for the splendor of their flowers and for their grotesque and varied shapes. The round and the oval, about the size of a hen's egg, abound in this plain, and are set with long thorns, hard, and as fine and sharp as needles. When trampled by the horses' feet, these thorns spring up and adhere to the legs and belly of the animals, and thus render them furious and unmanageable. We soon arrived in Rosebud valley, and continuing our route until sunset we encamped on the borders of a little river bearing the same name, and quite near a beautiful pond, over which a new dam had been constructed by the beavers.

This section of the country offered us frequent occasions of admiring the labors and ingenious industry of these intelligent animals. They are more numerous here than in any other district I have visited, and I am told that their preservation is chiefly attributable to the continual excursions of war-parties, either Sioux, Assiniboins, or Blackfeet, all implacable enemies of the Crows, and these prevent the huntsman and the savages from hazarding a chase in these parts. At present, the fur of the beaver is of so little value that their search is almost abandoned. In ancient times the Crows held the beaver in the highest veneration because this nation imagined that they became beavers after death. This article of their creed entailed the loss of his scalp to many a bold huntsman among the whites, for every Crow Indian considered himself bound to protect, defend and avenge, even with death, the spirits of " his near relations," in their second state of existence. During late years this dogma of faith has been erased from their religious code, to the great detriment certainly of the poor beavers. Such superstitions will never wholly disappear until the Catholic faith enlightens these wilds, over which the darkness of paganism still hangs.

For four days we continued ascending the valley of the Rosebud, about 110 miles, as high as the sources of the river. There again we found the soil light and sandy; it was covered with wild rose bushes, cactus, and artemisia of several varieties, and intersected with ravines which were exceedingly difficult to be crossed with baggage-wagons. The shores of this river relieve the eye with an occasional group of cottonwood, intermingled with plum, cherry and service-trees, which thrive here in undisturbed plenty.

The Little Wolf Mountains, whose rivulets give rise to the Rosebud river, have in general a charming appearance in their hills and acclivities — and in their combined aspect as a whole chain. The absence of water, especially of spring-water, is a painful privation to travelers in this season of the year. We found, indeed, some holes of stagnant water in the dry beds of the rivers, but the taste is almost insupportable. The buffalo herds are less numerous here than in the lands lying farther north, owing no doubt to bands of warriors that roam over the space. Yet we perceived at every moment large troops of elk, and a great many deer and mountain sheep. We remarked recent traces of enemies — such as the slain carcasses of very dangerous wild animals, the impress of human feet in the sand, concealed encampments and half-quenched fires. Consequently we redoubled our vigilance, in order to avoid a perilous surprise. A beautiful chief's coat of scarlet cloth, trimmed with gold lace, suspended from the branch of a tree, was perceived waving in the air like a floating banner. There was a race to win the prize; an Assiniboin having carried it off, it was most carefully scrutinized. The conclusion was that it had been offered only the day before by some Blackfoot chief. These Indians, when on the warpath, frequently make such offerings either to the sun or to the moon, hoping thus to render them propitious, so that through their intervention they may obtain many scalps and horses. The most precious objects which they possess and which they esteem most, are often thus sacrificed. The Mandans, the Aricaras and their neighbors go still further: they cut off fingers and make deep incisions in the fleshy parts of the body before starting for war, in order to obtain the same favors of their false gods.

On my last visit to the Aricaras, Minnetarees and Mandans I could not discern a single man at all advanced in years whose body was not mutilated, or who possessed his full number of fingers. How profound their ignorance! How fearful the idolatry in which these unhappy tribes are plunged! To this sombre picture we may add a passionate love of gaming, which consumes the hours which should be devoted to necessary repose; a sloth which nothing but hunger can arouse; an innate inclination to dissimulation, gluttony, and to whatever can flatter sensuality. And still, amid this ocean of miseries, they feel an indescribable need of invoking a power superior to man: they listen attentively to any instruction which reveals to them the means of procuring his favor, and give them information of his attributes. They love the missionary, and ever listen to him with delight; and in his quality of priest receive him with friendship and respect. To judge by the respect and friendship shown me as a priest, on all occasions and circumstances, by the Indians on the Upper Missouri, I am satisfied that if a few zealous priests were stationed here, they would soon become generous Christians, full of zeal and ardor for the glory of our God and his holy law. "They would know their Father who is in heaven, and him whom he has sent on earth;" they would become faithful disciples of the Redeemer, who so ardently desires the salvation of all, and who did not disdain to shed his blood for them on the cross.

On the 22d of August we quitted the head of the Rosebud and crossed the mountainous train which separates it from Tongue river. The crest of this chain presents a continuation of sandstone cliffs, under a multitude of varied and fantastical shapes. The sides are almost perpendicular, and consequently very difficult to ascend or descend with our wagons. The aid of every arm was necessary to sustain the teams. For several days we had had to camp by ponds filled with disgusting water. How agreeable the contrast to find ourselves on the borders of this beautiful river, the waters of which are pure as crystal! How eagerly did we allay our burning thirst! The horses and mules appeared to rejoice, neighing and rearing with impatience; as soon as their bridles were loosened, they plunged into the waves and indulged in long draughts. When the whole caravan had assuaged their thirst, we continued our route. We traversed an undulating plain; and perceiving in the distance a prominent point of land which appeared sparkling with crystals, we named it Diamond Hill. It was covered with large pieces of mica. For the first time since we left Fort Alexander we breakfasted beside beautiful springs of fresh water, the most remarkable in the country.

After advancing about twenty-three miles that day, we camped on the banks of Tongue river. There we had new occasion to recall and arrange our recollections of the land we had seen. Coal also appears as abundant south of the Yellowstone as above it; we met it everywhere. The slopes of the hills are well wooded with larch and pines of every variety up to the very summit, throughout the whole extent of the Little Wolf chain. This we left for that of the Great Wolf, which we reach before arriving at the Black Hills. These mountains form spurs of the Rocky Mountains; the principal summits are over 13,000 feet high.[9] On the 23d we left Tongue river. For ten hours we marched over mountain and valley, following the course of one of its tributaries, making, however, only about twenty-five miles. On the day following we crossed a chain of lofty mountains to attain the Lower Piney Fork, nearly twenty miles distant. We arrived quite unexpectedly on the borders of a lovely little lake about six miles long, and my traveling companions gave it my name.[10] There our hunters killed several wild ducks. On quitting the lake, we discovered another elevated portion of land on which red mounds and scoriæ, volcanic remains, are scattered in all directions, as far as the Upper Piney Fork; and there petrified trees are met with at every step. Toward evening we encamped at the base of a mountain, after advancing about twenty-five miles, and thought ourselves favored in finding a pool of water. The next twenty-four miles were taken in the direction of Sandy river, through undulating plains and mountainous hills.

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[9] Father De Smet here refers, presumably, to the great mountain system known as the Big Horn range, whose commanding summit, Cloud Peak, is 13,300 feet high.

[10] This lake still bears the name De Smet. It is soon to be utilized for storing the waters of Piney Fork to be used in irrigation.

On the 27th of August we reached Powder river, one of the principal tributaries of the Yellowstone. Our wagoners will not soon forget the difficulty of conducting their teams through this vast route, for it was a very miserable, elevated, sterile plain, covered with wormwood and intersected with countless ravines, and they vowed they would never be caught driving a wagon there again.

The valley of Powder river, in the neighborhood of the Gourd [Pumpkin] Buttes, which are in sight, is three or four miles wide. Although the soil was light, the verdure was fine and the grazing abundant. The part where I crossed the valley is well wooded, and they told me that wood, especially cottonwood and fruit trees, is abundant all along the river. This valley forms a beautiful contrast with the high plains of these parts, which are the very picture of aridity and desolation, with naught but weeds, rocks and deep ravines.

Here we happened to meet with three young Indians of the Crow tribe. They had been on the lookout for a Sioux camp, intending to steal horses, but had not succeeded. These young men advised us to pursue the vale of a little river which they pointed out to us, assuring us that by taking that direction we should soon arrive at Fort Laramie. I was surprised at this counsel, for the course of the valley was southwest; however, we followed the route indicated by the Crows. This proved the most rugged and difficult part of our journey, hence we styled it " the valley of a thousand miseries." A name could not have been better chosen. Imagine a river with perpendicular banks, winding in a serpentine course through a narrow valley, so that in a distance of three miles we were obliged to cross it ten or twelve times, with carts and wagons, at the imminent risk of killing our horses and mules and destroying our vehicles. The soil, too, was sterile, and as we journeyed on water became scarce — on the fifth day it failed completely, and it did again on the last. The night that ensued was a hard trial, for after so long a march we had not a drop of water to quench our burning thirst.

On the 1st of September, having traversed three chains of hills, we gradually attained the summit of the Black Hills. We had one cart less, and one heavy wagon so broken that it had to be tied together with strips of raw buffalo-hide. From the summit we were so happy as to perceive a distant lake. We eagerly hastened in that direction, for we were consumed with thirst, and had serious fears for our beasts of burden, which were slackening their weary pace. To our astonishment, we directly perceived that we were still at a great distance from Fort Laramie. Instead of being near that fort, in accordance with the assurances of the three Crows, we discovered ourselves in sight of the Red Buttes, [near Casper, Wyoming] twenty-five miles off. This is a well-known spot on the Great Oregon Route, and is 160 miles from Fort Laramie. On the top of the Black Hills I left a little souvenir of my passage,— on a very high rock of the form of a pulpit, I carved a large and handsome cross. Ah! may the Indian tribes scattered throughout the wild solitude soon learn the great truths which this holy emblem announces! May they soon leave the bondage in which error has chained them during innumerable ages!

The whole region over which we passed, south of the Yellowstone, offers only feeble hopes to civilization. The soil is light, wood scarce, and water wanting during a large portion of the year. It is a country favorable solely to hunters and wandering tribes. All the animals common in the wilderness abound, and during long years to come they will rest undisturbed in their possessions. When all the fertile tracts, yet vacant in the immense Indian territory, shall be occupied, then only will the lands below the Yellowstone attract attention; then alone will necessitous and persevering industry succeed in drawing any considerable portion of this region from its present barrenness.

In the neighborhood and along the base of the Black Hills there lies a very extensive tract of fertile and tillable land. The verdure is rich and abounds in all the valleys, and these valleys penetrate the mountains like so many veins, where millions of domestic animals might be raised; for the springs and rivulets, so seldom occurring in the central section between the Yellowstone and the Black Hills, are very numerous in the interior and at the base of these mountains. There are also a great many sites favorable to the erection of mills. The climate is reputed delightful, and the noble forests of cedar and pine would abundantly supply the necessities of a population. Mines of lead and iron are very numerous.

The 2d day of September, 1851, we found ourselves on the Great Route to Oregon, over which, like successive ocean surges, the caravans, composed of thousands of emigrants from every country and clime, have passed during these latter years to reach the rich gold mines of California, or to take possession of the new lands in the fertile plains and valleys of Utah and Oregon. These intrepid pioneers of civilization have formed the broadest, longest and most beautiful road in the whole world — from the United States to the Pacific Ocean. On the skirts of this magnificient highway there is an abundance of grass for supplying the cattle and animals appertaining to the caravans which are incessantly traveling on it, from early spring to autumn, every succeeding year.

Our Indian companions, who had never seen but the narrow hunting-paths by which they transport themselves and their lodges, were filled with admiration on seeing this noble highway, which is as smooth as a barn floor swept by the winds, and not a blade of grass can shoot on it on account of the continual passing. They conceived a high idea of the countless White Nation, as they express it. They fancied that all had gone over that road, and that an immense void must exist in the land of the rising sun. Their countenances testified evident incredulity when I told them that their exit was in nowise perceived in the lands of the whites. They styled the route the Great Medicine Road of the Whites. The term medicine is applied by them to whatever they find grand, religious, mysterious or incomprehensible. They visited and examined in detail all the forsaken camping-grounds on the way; they brought a great variety of objects to me to have their use and signification explained; they filled their pouches with knives, forks, spoons, basins, coffee-pots and other cooking articles, axes, hammers, etc. With the bits of earthenware which bore any figure or inscription, they fabricated some ornament for their necks and ears. How wonderful will be the accounts given of the Great Medicine Road by our unsophisticated Indians when they go back to their villages, and sit in the midst of an admiring circle of relatives![11]

But these relics collected by our savage friends were not the sole vestiges of the great multitude of emigrants who, in search of gold, had crossed this vast plain with a rare courage and unheard-of fatigues and difficulties. The bleached bones of domestic animals disseminated profusely along the route; the rising mound hastily made over the grave of a parent or a friend deceased during the long journey, and the tribute offered to memory in a coarse and rudely-carved inscription on a narrow strip of board or on a stone, with other graves which offered no such testimonial of affection, furnish ample and melancholy proofs that death had considerably thinned their ranks. By such disasters thousands of emigrants have found themselves suddenly arrested, and been mocked in the flattering hope of wealth and pleasure.

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[11] The Oregon Trail, to which Father De Smet very justly devotes much attention, was first traveled by white men over portions of its course by the Astorians, on their outward and return journeys, in 1811–13. South Pass, the celebrated crossing of the Continental Divide, was discovered about 1824. The route had become well established by the fur travelers before emigration set in. The California Trail, which branched off in the valley of Bear River, did not come prominently into use until after the discovery of gold. The Trail remained the great highway of trans-continental travel down nearly to the advent of the railroads.

The countless fragments of conveyances, the heaps of provisions, tools of every kind, and other objects with which the emigrants must have provided themselves at great expense, but which the most impatient, eager to outstrip others in the Western Eldorado, had forsaken and cast aside, testify to that bold recklessness with which they hazard everything in this enterprise which has proved fatal to thousands. The picture traced by Thornton[12] in his Journal of 1848, is the most shocking that can be contemplated. Arrived in the arid lands of California, the famine had at first reduced them to eating their horses and mules; soon they had recourse to dead bodies; then the dying were not spared, and at last they actually devoured each other! What a salutary proof of the uncertainty that accompanies the grandest perspectives in the life of man, and of the deceptions that unveil to him his native weakness!

We followed the great road south of the Platte to the foot of the Black Hills. On this road we found ourselves relieved from these obstacles which had so often endangered our vehicles and our animals. After eight days' journey along the Platte, we arrived at Fort Laramie without the least trouble or accident. The commander of the fort informed us that the Great Council was to take place at the mouth of Horse river, in a vast plain situated nearly thirty-five miles lower down on the Platte. The next day I accepted the polite invitation of the respected Colonel [Robert] Campbell,[13] and took a seat in his carriage. We arrived at the plain of the intended council about sunset. There the superintendent, Colonel Mitchell,[14] received me with warm friendship and cordiality, insisting that I should become his guest during the whole time of the council. All the others showed me great respect.

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[12] J. Quinn Thornton, *Oregon and California in 1848.* N. Y., 1848, 2 vols.

In this immense plain above mentioned, we found about a thousand lodges, that is to say, 10,000 Indians, representing Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahos, with several deputations from the Crows, Snakes or Shoshones, Aricaras, Assiniboins and Minnetarees. I purpose entertaining you in my next with the object of the council, and with my interviews with the Indians.

I subjoin a list of the animals killed by our hunters from the 1st of August till the 9th of September, 1851: Two deer, eleven antelope, thirty-seven bison cows, twenty-two bulls, three bears, two stags, seven Rocky Mountain sheep, two badgers, two polecats, one porcupine, one wolf, seventeen hares and rabbits, thirteen ducks, eighteen heathcock, sixteen pheasants.

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[13] Robert Campbell, 1804–1879, an Irishman by birth, came to St. Louis in 1824; went to the mountains the year following, remained in the fur trade on the spot for ten years, and at St. Louis for ten years more; one of the foremost business men of that city in his time. The Government made several demands on his knowledge of Indian affairs, in the negotiation of treaties.—*American Fur Trade of the Far West*, p. 260.

[14] David D. Mitchell, born in Louisa county, Va., July 31, 1806, died in St. Louis, Mo., May 31, 1861, had a long and honorable career in the fur trade, first as a clerk and then as a partner in the Upper Missouri outfit. He was the builder of Fort McKenzie in 1832. He became United States Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Central Division, with headquarters at St. Louis, September 20, 1841, and held the position at intervals until 1852. He entered the volunteer service during the war with Mexico and was lieutenant-colonel of a Missouri regiment raised by Sterling Price. He served with Colonel Doniphan during the war, and commanded the detachment that captured Chihuahua.—*American Fur Trade of the Far West*, p. 388.

CHAPTER IV.[1]

THE GREAT COUNCIL AND RETURN TO ST. LOUIS.

The eighteen-days' Peace Council — Adoptions of brothers — Treaty with the Government — Mass and baptism — Notes on Indian customs — Grand dog-feast — Distribution of presents — The assembly breaks up — Down the Platte — Prince Paul of Wurtemberg — Pawnees at Fort Kearney — Potawatomi mission in Kansas — Indian deputies introduced to fruit and vegetables — Their behavior on board ship — Medicine matters — Arrival in St. Louis.

DURING the eighteen days that the Great Council lasted, the union, harmony and amity that reigned among the Indians were truly admirable. Implacable hatreds, hereditary enmities, cruel and bloody encounters, with the whole past, in fine, were forgotten. They paid mutual visits, smoked the calumet of peace together, exchanged presents, partook of numerous banquets, and all the lodges were open to strangers. A practice occurring but on the most amicable and fraternal occasions was seen — this is, the adopting of children and of brothers on each side. There was a perfect unanimity of views between Colonel Mitchell, superintendent of the Indian Territory, and Major [Thomas] Fitzpatrick, and nothing was omitted to foster these germs of peace. The object of the assembly was a distinguished proof of the highest benevolence on the part of the United States Government, as well as of the sincere desire of establishing a lasting peace among tribes hostile to each other, and of obtaining a right of passage through their possessions for the whites, and making the Indians compensation for injuries and losses the latter may have sustained from the whites.

At the opening of the council, the superintendent made known to the savages that the object of the assembly was the acceptation by them of the treaty, such as it had been prepared beforehand, with the consent of the President of the United States. This treaty was read sentence by sentence, and distinctly explained to the different interpreters, that they might have the exact and legitimate meaning of each article. The preamble explains that it is a treaty between the agents named on one side by the President of the United States, and on the other by the chiefs or braves of the Indian nations that reside south of the Missouri, east of the Rocky Mountains, and north of the boundary line of Texas and Mexico, viz.: The Sioux or Dakotas, the Cheyennes, the Arapahos, the Crows, the Minnetarees, the Mandans and Aricaras. The principal articles were:

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[1] Comprises Letters VI and VII, Second Series, *Western Missions and Missionaries.*

Article 1st.— The Indians recognize and admit the right of the United States to form roads and establish military posts in their territory. *Article 2d.*— Solemn obligations agreed upon for the maintenance of peace, and for repairing the damages and losses sustained by the whites on the part of the Indians. *Article 3d.*— Indemnity accorded to the Indians for the destruction caused in their hunting-grounds, their forests, pasturages, etc., by travelers from the States who cross their lands. The present of $50,000 is granted to them on this ground. *Article 4th.*— During fifteen coming years, $50,000 will be annually paid in objects and gifts which may prove useful or necessary to the Indians.

The treaty was signed by the agents of the United States, and by all the principal chiefs of the different nations who were present. Another treaty in favor of the half-breeds and the whites residing in the country was proposed, to wit: That a tract of country be assigned them for their use, in order to form agricultural establishments and colonies, and that they should obtain the assistance of the Government of the United States in the execution of their project. This is the sole means of preserving union among all those wandering and scattered families, which become every year more and more numerous, and of establishing them in one or two colonies, with churches and schools, for their general instruction and well-being.

With a few exceptions, all the half-breeds are baptized and received as children of the Church. During twenty years they have petitioned to have Catholic priests, and have manifested their good will to meet the wants of their missionaries and to maintain them. If ecclesiastical superiors are not aided to make timely provision, it is to be feared that the care of these new colonies will pass under the direction of men who will spare no exertion to extinguish in the hearts of the courageous and simple people the germs of faith, and the good wishes they entertain in favor of our holy religion. The question, "Shall they have priests?" involves the salvation of several thousand souls. It must be soon decided; it is already agitated, and unless Catholic missionaries are sent there, I repeat it, it is to be feared that persons hostile to the true faith may take possession of the ground.

On the second Sunday of September, Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, three days after my arrival, some lodges of buffalo-hides were arranged and ornamented as a sanctuary, on the plain of the Great Council. Under this tent I had the happiness of offering the holy sacrifice, in presence of all the gentlemen assisting at the council, of all the half-bloods and whites and of a great concourse of Indians. After my instruction, twenty-eight children (half-bloods) and five adults were regenerated in the holy waters of baptism, with all the ceremonies prescribed by the Church.

The Canadians, French and half-breeds who inhabit the Indian territory treat all the priests who visit them with great kindness, attention and respect. It is truly afflicting to meet them in this wilderness, like so many strayed sheep. By the zealous efforts of two good clergymen, fine missions could be founded among them — these would furnish catechists, and these latter would labor in concert with the priests for the conversion of so many benighted pagans, who wander forsaken in the deserts and destitute of religious hope and consolation.

During the two weeks that I passed in the plain of the Great Council, I paid frequent visits to the different tribes and bands of savages, accompanied by one or more of their interpreters. These last were extremely obliging in devoting themselves to my aid in announcing the gospel. The Indians listened eagerly to my instructions. Each time that I addressed them concerning the particular vices which I knew reigned among them, they owned their faults with admirable simplicity and candor, free from all human respect. During an instruction in the camp of the Ogallalas, a Sioux tribe, in which I explained to them the Ten Commandments, when I arrived at the sixth and seventh, a general whispering and embarrassed laugh took place among my barbarous auditory. I inquired the reason of this conduct, and explained to them that the law I came to announce to them was not mine, but God's, and that it was obligatory on all the children of men; that the word of God required all their attention and respect: that those who observe his commandments will have eternal life, while the prevaricators of his holy law shall receive hell and its torments as their lot. The head chief at once rose and replied: "Father, we hear thee; we knew not the words of the Great Spirit, and we acknowledge our ignorance. We are great liars and thieves; we have killed; we have done all the evil that the Great Spirit forbids us to do; but we did not know those beautiful words; in future we will try to live better, if thou wilt but stay with us and teach us."

They besought me to explain baptism to them, as several of them had been present when I baptized the half-blood children. I complied with their request, and gave them a lengthy instruction on its blessings and obligations. All then entreated me to grant this favor to their infants. The next day the ceremony took place; 239 children of the Ogallalas (the first of their tribe) were regenerated in the holy waters of baptism, to the great joy and satisfaction of the whole nation. I held daily conferences on religion, sometimes with one band of Indians, sometimes with another. They all listened with great attention, and unanimously expressed the wish to be supplied with Catholic missionaries.

Among the Arapahos, I baptized 305 little ones; among the Cheyennes, 253; and among the Brûlés and Osage Sioux, 280; in the camp of Painted Bear, fifty-six. The number of the half-bloods that I baptized in the plain of the Great Council and on the river Platte is sixty-one. In the different forts on the Missouri, I baptized, during the months of June and July last, 392 children. Total number of baptisms, 1,586. A great number died shortly after, in consequence of diseases which reigned in the Indian camps.

I witnessed for the first time a singular rite, to which the Cheyennes attach as much importance as the Asiatic tribes do to circumcision; this is the "ear-cutting of the children." This custom appears to be common among all the tribes of the Upper Missouri, and probably in other places, though there may be perhaps some variety in the form of the ceremony. Among the Cheyennes, the mother chooses the operator and puts the knife into his hands. She extends the child on the skin of some animal, carefully prepared and painted, and which the Canadians call "*pare flèche*." While one of the relations or friends holds the infant in a quiet posture, the operator makes two to five incisions in the rim of each ear. These incisions are destined to receive and carry ornaments. The mother makes a present of a horse to the operator, and another present to each one of the assistants.

In the same place, rudely arranged for the occasion, and composed of six lodges, each lodge consisting of twenty hides of buffalo cow, we witnessed another ceremony. The Shoshones, or Snake Indians, had scarcely quitted the Rocky Mountains to repair to the Great Council, when they were pursued and attacked by a party of Cheyennes, who killed two of their men and carried away their scalps. The Cheyennes must pay, or "cover the body," which is a satisfaction required by the savages on such occasions, before they can accept the calumet of peace or smoke it together. On this day the principal braves of the Cheyenne nation and forty warriors of the Shoshones were assembled. Several orations were delivered as preliminaries of peace.

Then followed a feast, of which all partook. It consisted simply of corn, crushed and thoroughly boiled. The dogs were spared this time, for the Shoshones are an exception to the common rule among the Indians; that is, they never eat dog flesh. The feast over, the Cheyennes brought suitable presents of tobacco, blankets, knives, pieces of red and blue cloth, and deposited them in the centre of the circle. The two scalps were also exposed, and then returned to the brothers of the two wretched victims, who were seated at the head of the circle, between the two chiefs of their nation. The brothers were solemnly assured that the "scalp dance"[2] did not take place. They wore, however, a very sombre air, and on accepting the scalps were deeply affected. However, they embraced the murderers, received the donations, and distributed the larger portion of them to their companions. After this, the usual signs of peace and amity, presents and reciprocal adoptions of children, were interchanged; their orators employed all their eloquence to strengthen the good feeling which appeared to reign in the assembly, and to render it lasting. The next night the Cheyennes visited the lodges of the Shoshones, who were encamped beside my little tent. Songs and dances were prolonged till daylight, and prevented me from sleeping. These amusements among the Indians are perfectly innocent. I have never been able to detect the slightest gesture that could offend modesty. During my waking hours that night I reflected on the excellent dispositions of these pagans, and thought, could the clergy of Europe but know them, they would eagerly hasten hither to gladden our Holy Mother the Church, with thousands of new children.

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[2] This ceremony, which is an essential condition, consists of dances and songs. The latter recount all the exploits of the braves. The ceremony is renewed every day, and often lasts several weeks. Women, old and young, as well as children, can take part; and, in fact, the women make most noise and exertion.—*Author's note.*

During this assembly, as on other occasions, I frequently remarked the skill and facility with which the Indians communicate their ideas by signs and gestures. Their movements are highly expressive, and appear to be reduced to a language as perfect and communicable as that of the deaf and dumb among us. By means of these signs an Indian will relate the chief events of his life. This mute speech may be styled a language of precaution and defense, for when they meet in the desert, in their excursions, they make signs while yet very far apart, before they approach. They immediately know with whom they have to deal and what there is in question. They have, however, still more remarkable modes of communicating thought. The large figures displayed on their buffalo-robes are hieroglyphics, as easily understood by an intelligent Indian as written words are by ourselves; and they often contain the narrative of some important event. This is not, however, because words are wanting in their various dialects, which are quite copious and expressive.

I attended the council from the outset to the close. As I have already stated, 10,000 Indians, belonging to different tribes, many of which had been at war from time immemorial, met on the same plain. During the twenty-three days of the assembly there was no disorder: on the contrary, all was peaceable and tranquil, which is saying much for Indians. They seemed all to form but a single nation. Polite and kindly to each other, they spent their leisure hours in visits, banquets and dances; spoke of their once interminable wars and divisions as past things, to be absolutely forgotten, or "buried," according to their expression. There was not a remark in all their conversations to displease; never did the calumet pass in peace through so many hands. To convey an idea of the importance of this action, I must observe that smoking the calumet together is equivalent to a treaty confirmed by oath, which no one can contravene without dishonoring himself in the eyes of all his tribe. It was really a touching spectacle to see the calumet, the Indian emblem of peace, raised heavenward by the hand of a savage, presenting it to the Master of Life, imploring his pity on all his children on earth and begging him to confirm the good resolutions which they had made.

Notwithstanding the scarcity of provisions felt in the camp before the wagons came, the feasts were numerous and well attended. No epoch in Indian annals, probably, shows a greater massacre of the canine race. Among the Indians the flesh of the dog is the most honorable and esteemed of all viands, especially in the absence of buffalo and other animals. On the present occasion it was a last resource. The carnage then may be conceived. I was invited to several of these banquets; a great chief, in particular, wished to give me a special mark of his friendship and respect for me. He had filled his great kettle with little fat dogs, skins and all. He presented me, on a wooden platter, the fattest, well boiled. I found the meat really delicate, and I can vouch that it is preferable to sucking-pig, which it nearly resembles in taste.

The Indians regaled me several times with a dish highly esteemed among them. It consists of plums, dried in the sun, and afterward prepared with pieces of meat, like a stew. I must own that I found it quite palatable. But hear what I learned subsequently, as to their manner of preparing it. When an Indian woman wishes to preserve the plums, which grow in profusion here, she collects a great quantity, and then invites her neighbors to her lodge to pass an agreeable afternoon. Their whole occupation then consists in chatting and sucking the stones from the plums, for they keep only the skins, which, after being sun-dried, are kept for grand occasions.

The wagons containing the presents destined by the Government to the Indians, reached here on the 20th of September. The safe arrival of this convoy was an occasion of general joy. Many were in absolute destitution. The next day the wagons were unloaded and the presents suitably arranged. The flag of the United States floated from a tall staff before the tent of the superintendent, and a discharge of cannon announced to the Indians that the division of the presents was about to take place. Without delay, the occupants of the various camps flocked in,—men, women and children,—in great confusion, and in their gayest costume, daubed with paints of glaring hues and decorated with all the gewgaws they could boast. They took the respective places assigned to each particular band, thus forming an immense circle, covering several acres of land, and the merchandise was displayed in the centre. The view of such an assembly would give an interesting theme to a Hogarth or a Cruikshank.

The great chiefs of the different nations were served first, and received suits of clothes. You may easily imagine their singular movements on appearing in public, and the admiration which they excited in their comrades, who were never weary inspecting them. The great chiefs were, for the first time in their lives, pantalooned; each was arrayed in a general's uniform, a gilt sword hanging at his side. Their long, coarse hair floated above the military costume, and the whole was crowned by the burlesque solemnity of their painted faces.

Colonel Mitchell employed the Indians as his agents in distributing the presents to the various bands. The arrangements were characterized by benevolence and justice. The conduct of this vast multitude was calm and respectful. Not the slightest index of impatience or of jealousy was observed during the distribution; each band appeared indifferent until its portion was received. Then, glad or satisfied, but always quiet, they removed from the plain with their families and their lodges. They had heard the good news that the bison were numerous on the South Fork of the Platte, three days' march from the plain, and they hastily turned their steps in that direction, resolved to make the buffalo atone for the hunger they had recently suffered on the Great Council plain.

This assembly will form an era among them, and I trust will be ever dear to their memories. It closed on the 23d of September.

The happy results of this council are, no doubt, owing to the prudent measures of the commissioners of the Government, and more especially to their conciliatory manners in all their intercourse and transactions with the Indians. The council will doubtless produce the good effects they have a right to expect. It will be the commencement of a new era for the Indians — an era of peace. In future, peaceable citizens may cross the desert unmolested, and the Indian will have little to dread from the bad white man, for justice will be rendered to him.

Quite late in the afternoon of the 23d of September I bade farewell to the Creoles, Canadians and half-bloods. I exhorted them to live well and to pray to God, and to hope that he would soon send them spiritual succor for their temporal and eternal happiness and that of their children. I shook hands for the last time with the great chiefs and with a large number of Indians, and addressed them some encouraging words and promised to plead their cause with the great chiefs of the Black-gowns, and make known the desire, good intentions and hopes they had expressed to me, while they would daily, in all sincerity of heart, implore the "Master of Life" to send them zealous priests to instruct them in the way of salvation, which Jesus Christ, his only Son, came to trace to his children on earth.

I directed my course toward "the springs," situated about fourteen miles distant, in the vicinity of Robidoux' trading-house, for Colonel Mitchell had named this as the rendezvous for all those who proposed going directly to the United States. On the 24th, before sunrise, we set out in good and numerous company. I visited, in my way, two trading-houses, in order to baptize five half-blood children. In the course of the day we passed the famous Chimney-Rock, so often described by travelers. I had already seen it, in 1840 and 1841, in my first visit to the Rocky Mountains, and mentioned it in my letters. I found it considerably diminished in height.

We cast a last look upon the singular productions of nature, the Castle and the Tower, which are near the Chimney, and resemble the ruins of lordly residences scattered over several acres, and presenting a very elevated and broken surface amid a level plain.

Arrived on the Platte, at the place known as Ash Hollow, we turned our steps toward the South Fork, fifteen miles away, over a beautiful rolling country of great elevation. Here we met Prince P.,[3] accompanied only by a Prussian officer, on their way to enjoy a hunt in the Wind River Mountains. We exchanged our little news, and received with pleasure the interesting information which the prince gave us. His excellency must be indeed courageous, to undertake at his age so long a journey in such a wilderness, with but one man as suite, and in a wretched little open wagon, which carried the prince and his officer, as well as their whole baggage and provisions. Later, I learned that the prince intends to choose a location suited to agriculture, for the purpose of founding a German colony.

We live in an age when wonders multiply; we cannot say what, in the way of colonization, may not come to pass in a short time, after witnessing the success of the Mormons, who in less than five years have changed the face of a frightful desert and live there in great abundance. Yet I am free to maintain that if the prince has really formed the plan ascribed to him, which I scarcely credit, I pity from the bottom of my heart those who first embark in the expedition. The enemies whom they would have to meet are still too powerful: Crows, Blackfeet, Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahos and Snakes, are the most feared and warlike of the desert. A colony established in such a neighborhood, and against the will of the numerous warlike tribes in the vicinity of those mountains, would run great dangers and meet heavy obstacles. The influence of religion alone can prepare these parts for such a transformation. The threats and promises of colonists, their guns and sabres, would never effect what can be accomplished by the peaceful word of the Blackgown and the sight of the humanizing sign of the cross.

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[3] This was Prince Paul (Charles Frederick Augustus) of Wurtemberg. Father De Smet gives the name in full in his first draft of this letter. This somewhat mysterious individual visited the West in 1823 and again in 1830, by scanty contemporary mention; in the latter year a New Orleans paper spoke of him as a nephew of the King of England, and as being thirty-three years of age. He seems to have written an account of his travels, which is quoted by Maximilian. He was in fact brother to King William I of Wurtemberg, and he died the spring following this meeting, namely, April 16, 1852, at the age of sixty-seven years.

From the crossing of the South Fork to the junction of the Great Forks, the distance is reckoned to be seventy-five miles, and thence to Fort Kearney 150 miles. Wood is very rare along the Platte or Nebraska. From the junction of the two forks to the mouth the valley is six or eight miles wide, while the bed of the river is about two miles in width. In the spring, at the melting of the snows, when this river is high, it presents a magnificent sheet of water, with numerous isles and islets covered with verdure, and skirted with cottontrees and willows. In the autumn, on the contrary, it loses all interest and beauty. Its waters then escape into a great number of almost imperceptible passages and channels among the sand-banks which cover the bed through its whole length and extent.

When wood fails, as frequently happens on the banks of the Platte or Nebraska, the meals are cooked at fires of buffalo dung, which, when dried, burns like turf.

The soil of the Nebraska is in general rich and deep, mingled, however, with sand in several localities. There is a great variety of grasses, which with numerous shrubs, covered with flowers of dazzling beauty, present a wide field of study to the lover of botany. As we retire from the valley, a very sensible change is perceptible in the productions of the soil: instead of the former robust and vigorous vegetation, the plains are overgrown with a short, crisp grass; however, it is very nourishing, and eagerly sought by the herds of buffalo and countless wild animals that graze on it.

We arrived at Fort Kearney on the 2d of October, where Colonel Mitchell, the superintendent, held a conference with a deputation of some twenty Pawnee chiefs and braves. They expressed their regret that, not having assisted at the Great Council, they found themselves excluded from the advantages that the treaty would secure to the other nations, and had no share in the presents made by the Government. They all made solemn promises to adhere to the spirit of the treaty, and to execute the orders of their "Great Father the President," who desired that they should live peaceably with all their neighbors, and decreed the cessation of all depredations exercised against travelers from the United States who cross this territory. These Pawnee chiefs and warriors received with all the politeness of Indian customs the various deputations which accompanied us on their way to Washington,— that is, the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahos, hitherto their mortal enemies,— regaling them with banquets, dances and songs. "My heart leaps with joy," shouted Big Fatty, a chief of the Pawnee Loups, "because I find myself in presence of those that from my infancy I have been taught to consider as my mortal foes. Cheyennes, I and my warriors have made many incursions into your territories, to steal your horses and rob you of your scalps. Yes, my heart bounds with delight, for it had never dreamed of meeting you face to face, and of touching your hand in friendship. You see me here poor — I have not a horse to mount. Well, I will gladly go on foot the remainder of my days, if the tomahawk is to be buried by all." He offered the calumet to all the deputies, and several accepted it. A young Cheyenne chief named Ride on the Clouds refused to touch it, and thus answered the Pawnee: "Neither thou nor thy people have invited me into your territory. My father," added he, pointing to the superintendent, "requested me to follow him, and I follow him: I accept not thy calumet of peace, lest I betray thee. Perchance while I now speak to thee, our brave warriors seek the lodges of thy tribe. No! I will not deceive thee, therefore know that peace exists not between me and thee. I speak thus fearlessly and clearly, for I stand beneath the banner of my father."

The allusions of the Cheyenne seemed not to mar the existing harmony; the dances, songs, speeches and banquets were kept up till late in the night.

The following are the names of the Indian deputies.

The Cheyenne envoys are — *Voki vokammast,* or White Antelope; *Obalawsha,* or Red Skin; and *Vaive atoish,* or Rides on the Clouds.

The Arapaho deputies are — *Nehunutah,* or Eagle's Head; *Nocobotha,* or Tempest; and *Vash,* or Friday.

The Sioux deputies are — *Hakou-zetze,* or One Horn; *Kaive on nêve,* or Little Chief; *Pouskawit cah cah,* or Shellman; *Ehakahakeechtah,* or Watchful Elk; and *Mawgah,* or Goose. The last belongs to the Blackfoot Sioux.

The two Otoes and their wives, who joined us afterward, were *Wah-rush-a-menee,* or Black Elk; and his wife, *Mookapee,* or Eagle's Plume; *Wah-sho-chegorah,* or Black Bear; and his wife *How-ah-pee,* or Singing Bird.

At Fort Kearney we parted with Colonel Mitchell and his suite, who took the route to Table River [Nebraska City, by way of Ashland]. I joined Major Fitzpatrick and the deputies, and we continued on the southern route, which crosses the Indian Territory.

The country between the frontiers of Missouri and the Big Blue river for about 200 miles, presents a remarkable uniformity in all its leading features. Clay soil, rolling prairies and the shores of the rivers well wooded. You meet forests of oak and nut trees of all varieties, with maple and cottonwood and a variety of trees found in the east. The hillsides in several places abound in fine springs of water surrounded by beautiful groves, arranged with as much order and taste as if planted by the hand of man. While a luxuriant turf, enameled with fragrant flowers, replaces the briars and underwood, the prairies on all sides, surrounded by forests which protect the water-courses, present to the sight an ocean of verdure adorned with flowers, agitated by the wind and perfuming the air with a thousand odors.

The valley of the Kansas is broad, of a deep, brown vegetable soil: the same remark may be made of the valleys of the remaining rivers of this territory, all of which are suitable for agriculture. The streams of water are clear; they run over pebbly beds, between high banks, and teem with fine fish.

Major Fitzpatrick preferred taking the southern route, in order to give our friends, the Indian deputies, an opportunity of witnessing the progress that the tribes are capable of making in agriculture and the mechanic arts. He wished to convince them that labor and its results gradually conduct to happiness and ease, and that by adopting habits of industry man is freed from the necessity of wandering from place to place to obtain subsistence.

We reached St. Mary's, among the Potawatomies, on the 11th of October. Bishop Miège and the other Fathers of the Mission received us with great cordiality and kindness.

To give the Indian deputies a relish for labor by the tasting of the various products of farming, a quantity of vegetables and fruits were set before them. Potatoes, carrots, turnips, squashes, parsnips, melons, with apples and peaches, graced the board, and our forest friends did them most ample honor. One of the chiefs, Eagle Head, said to me, "Now, Father, we comprehend thy words. Thou hast told us that in a few years the buffalo would disappear from our territory; that we must take measures against the day of need; that then we can reap from the earth subsistence and even plenty for our children. When thou wast speaking to us, our ears were shut; now they are opened, for we have eaten the products of the soil. We see here a happy people, well fed and well clothed. We hope that the great Father (the bishop) will take pity on us and on our children. We wish to have Black-gowns with us, and we will cheerfully attend to their words."

The day after was Sunday, and all attended high mass. The church was well filled. The choir, composed of half-bloods and Indians, sang admirably the Gloria, the Credo and several hymns. The Reverend Father Gailland[4] delivered a sermon in Potawatomi, which lasted three-quarters of an hour, and the number of communicants was large. All this, joined with the attention, modesty and devotion of the whole auditory, some with prayer-books and others with beads, made a profound and, I hope, durable impression on the minds of our Indians of the plains. During several days they never ceased talking with me and questioning on all they had seen, calling it the doctrine that renders men happy here and conducts them to heaven. We found the mission in a flourishing state; the two schools are well attended; a community of nuns of the Sacred Heart have conciliated the affection of the women and girls of the nation, and are working among them with the greatest success. The Potawatomies approach their residences nearer and nearer to the church and to their "Good Fathers," and have resolutely commenced cultivating the ground and raising domestic animals. Every Sunday the Fathers have the consolation of contemplating a beautiful congregation of Indians assembled in the wood-built cathedral, and on an average 120 piously approaching the holy communion. We spent two days visiting the mission. The Indian chiefs quitted the establishment with hearts overflowing with delight, and in the consoling expectation of having similar happiness in their own tribes at no very distant future. God grant their hopes may be realized!

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[4] Reverend Maurice Gailland, a diligent student of native languages; compiled a grammar and lexicon of the Potawatomi language, acquired by the Smithsonian Institution.

The weather was fine, and in three days we attained Westport and Kansas [City] on the Missouri.

On the 16th of October we took places on board the steamboat *Clara.* Our Indian deputies had never seen a village or settlement of whites except what they had seen at Fort Laramie and at Fort Kearney; they knew nothing of the manner in which houses are constructed, hence they were in constant admiration; and when for the first time they saw a steamboat their wonder was at its height, although they appeared to entertain a certain fear as they stepped on board. A considerable time elapsed before they became accustomed to the noise arising from the escape of steam, and the bustle that took place at the ringing of bells, etc. They call the boat a "fire canoe," and were transported with delight at the sight of another boat ascending with a small boat behind, which they called a "papoose," or little child. When their apprehensions of danger had subsided, their curiosity augmented; they took the liveliest interest in whatever they saw for the first time. They were in grand costume and seated themselves on the promenade deck; as the boat approached the several towns and villages in her progress, they hailed each with shouts and songs.

On the 22d of October we reached St. Louis. A few days after all the members of the Indian deputation were invited to a banquet given in our university. They were highly pleased at the reception given them by the Reverend Father Provincial, and overjoyed at the encouraging hope that he gave them of having Black-gowns among them — a hope perhaps soon to be realized.

Recommending the poor Indian to your prayers, I beg you to believe me with profound respect.[5]

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[5] The word "medicine" is frequently found in letters written on the religious ideas, practices, and customs of the North American Indians. It is necessary to know the signification that the Indians themselves attach to this word.

The term Wah-kon is employed by the Indians to express anything that they cannot understand, whether supernatural, natural, or mechanical. A watch, an organ, a steamboat, or anything in fine, the operations of which exceed their capacity to understand, is called Wah-kon. God is called Wah-kon-tonga, or the Great Incomprehensible. The word *Tonga* in Sioux means great or large.

Wah-kon means, properly incomprehensible, inexpressible. It is badly translated by the whites, who always render it medicine; thus, for example, the word *Wah-kon-tonga*, or God, has been translated *Great Medicine!*

The word *medicine* has since been so universally applied to the different religious and superstitious ceremonies of the Indians, that all travelers use it when writing of the natives.

The word *medicine,* when applied to Indian ceremonies, whether religious or superstitious, has, however, no relation to the treatment of the body, but it has been so commonly adopted that I am forced to use it when speaking of the Indians. Thence are derived the compounds, "medicine-feast," "medicine-dance," "medicine-man," etc., and also "medicine-bag," or sack, containing idols, charms, and other superstitious articles.

My intention in giving this little note is to distinguish between *medicine* used in the sense of *medicament,* and the same word applied to charms, religious invocations, and ceremonies.—*Author's note.*

PART V.

THE UTAH AND OREGON EXPEDITIONS OF 1858–59, AND SOME PRECEDING EVENTS.

Itinerary for the years 1852–59.

1852.

FATHER DE SMET spent this year mainly in St. Louis. He made one excursion, as Socius, with the Father Provincial, to Louisville, Bardstown and Cincinnati.

Distance traveled, 1,478 miles.

1853.

"In the month of April of this year, with the approval of the consultors of the Vice-Province, the Reverend Father Provincial sent me to Europe, in company with the Right Reverend Bishop Miège, then Vicar Apostolic of the Western Indian Territory, east of the Rocky Mountains. His Lordship was to proceed to Rome, myself to France, Belgium and Holland, both on business of the Society."

While in Washington en route to New York, "we shook hands with President Pierce and were kindly entertained by his Excellency. I was made bearer of dispatches to various Ministers in several of the great European capitals, by recommendation of Colonel Benton and the kindness of the Secretary of State, the Honorable Mr. Marcy."

Visited Georgetown and Washington Colleges — Proceeded to New York — Entertained by the Fathers at Fordham and St. Xavier — May 9th embarked on Steamer *Fulton* — Crossed the Atlantic (eighth time) in eleven days — Landed at Havre — Proceeded to Paris whence Miège went to Rome and De Smet to Brussels — Father

De Smet then visited all the principal cities of Belgium and Holland.

November 17th left Belgium with seven candidates and in Paris was joined by Miège with five more — November 23d embarked at Havre on the steamer *Humboldt* (ninth crossing of the Atlantic) — Stormy voyage all the way — Compelled to put into Halifax for coal — Through incompetence of pilot taken on board, the *Humboldt* ran upon the Three Sisters reef (December 6th) and was completely wrecked, but without loss of life — De Smet's party entertained at the residence of Archbishop Walsh — December 8th the party boarded the *Niagara* which stopped en route from Liverpool to Boston — Reached Boston next day and disembarked — Father De Smet went alone to New York and returned — December 15th party left Boston and proceeded via Buffalo, Cleveland, Cincinnati and Louisville to St. Louis where they arrived December 26th.

Distance traveled, 12,000 miles.

1854.

This year was spent mainly in St. Louis with one visit with the Provincial to Louisville, Bardstown and Cincinnati; and another with Bishop Carroll to Lexington, Frankfort and other places.

Distance traveled, 1,400 miles.

1855.

During the course of this year Father De Smet with the Father Provincial made two trips to Louisville, Bardstown and Cincinnati, and two to Chicago, Milwaukee and other points.

Distance traveled, 4,468 miles.

1856.

Early in the year visited Louisville, Bardstown, Cincinnati, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and returned to St. Louis March 10th — September 9th left St. Louis for Europe — Embarked on the *Fulton* at New York September 20th (tenth crossing of the Atlantic) — "Being the time of the autumnal equinoxes, the weather was rather boisterous and the sky foggy and cloudy. The vessel steered for Cape Sable, the most southern point of Nova Scotia. On the third night it was dark and cloudy. To this time the captain had not been able to make any observations, except soundings. For a moment the dark clouds disappeared, the watchman cried out: "Land! Land!" The engine was stopped, the captain and officers were soon on deck. They had supposed that the steamer was a hundred miles southeast of Cape Sable. What could be the land they saw, on both sides? And how did the vessel come there? The danger was great. A few minutes more of covering, dark clouds, would have brought us to perish on the dangerous shoals and rocks of Nova Scotia in the Bay of Fundy. The steamer had found its way into this bay, carried on by a strong and setting tide. The land seen on both sides was the rocky, precipitous shores of St. Mary's bay. This happened on the night of the 24th [of September]."

Arrived at Havre October 3d — Reached Paris next day and took a stroll about the city, "to see as much of its wonders as possible. I was facing the Rue Rivoli, toward the Champs Élysées, when the great Lion and Lioness made their unexpected appearance in an open carriage. I had a good view of Napoleon III and of the Empress Eugénie, at a distance of hardly twelve feet."

Left Paris for Belgium October 7th and arrived in Brussels next day — Visited the larger towns of Belgium and Holland which consumed the remainder of the year.

Distance traveled, 9,995 miles.

1857.

Early in February went to Lille, France — Thence to Calais, London, Dublin and Limerick in Ireland, back to

London, Lille and Belgium — Visited Aix la Chapelle, Prussia — Made a tour of Holland and returned to Belgium.

April 21st embarked at Antwerp on the steamer *Leopold I* for New York (eleventh crossing of the Atlantic). "Usually on board of a vessel with many passengers, mostly strangers to each other, the first day of the voyage is spent in looking around; in making a few congenial acquaintances, in rendering one's self comfortable below and on deck. Jolly fellows are always found in a big crowd and always ready to step forward. The fiddle, the harp, the accordion, were produced; a party soon formed and we had dancing and singing. Our deck resembled a floating village, all people on the alert, as on great picnic occasions.

What is beautiful and pleasant is seldom of a lasting nature, and the sequel will prove this. On the 23d, at half-past four in the afternoon we left Southampton. We soon lost sight of the island of Wight and of the English coast. Though the wind was moderate and the weather fine, we met a high, swollen and agitated sea, which tossed the vessel violently to and fro, and now behold the reverse of the picture, or picnic. This day and the two following were like days of mourning, without a song or a dance, without fun or any animation whatever. The dinner table was almost deserted, and appetite and gaiety had both left together. Here and there groups of men, women and children were observed, leaning over the side of the vessel, with haggard looks and pale faces, paying their tribute and forced respects to the sea. Surely Neptune was at his post, this inexorable tax gatherer called for his toll, and to the last particle it was exacted.

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As the sea became calmer, the sick were soon restored and dances and songs became again the order of the day.

The wind continued moderate and the weather fair till we arrived on the Newfoundland banks, on the 2d of May.

This is the regions of rains and fogs, which lasted four days and nights. No observations could be taken and nothing could be distinguished at a short distance from the vessel. The dreadful collisions of the *Lyonais* and *Arctic* were then still recent, as a warning to other vessels, which might be on the same track. The great and piercing steam whistle was opened every five minutes. I had the great happiness and consolation to offer up the holy sacrifice of mass every day, with few exceptions. My young companions approached the holy table frequently, and several passengers, with joy, availed themselves of the happy opportunity of observing their religious and Christian duties. The little altar surmounted by a little statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary was neatly and beautifully adorned. Before it we said in common and daily, our evening and morning prayers, and sang one or two appropriate canticles. On Sunday I said mass in the large cabin, at which about 150 persons assisted, several Protestants asking the favor to be admitted. In the evening of the 6th, the sky cleared up and the moon appeared in its full lustre and splendor, reflecting itself majestically, with all its surrounding sparkling stars, on an even unrippled ocean. Never did I behold at sea a calmer and more beautiful night. I made the best of it, and did not retire to rest before two in the morning.

On the 7th the sky was clear, the sea was tranquil and even, hardly a ripple stirred the surface of its waters and from its bosom rose the majestic sun, in all its lustre and glory, spreading and reflecting its dazzling rays and beams, high and deep above and below the horizon. Eastwardly the ocean appeared like in a blaze and resembled a boundless mass of molten gold. Truly grand and sublime is the sight of the rising sun at sea. *"Mirabilia opera tua, Domine, et anima mea cognoscit nimis."* (Ps. 138–14.) Two vessels were seen on these apparently boiling and red fiery waters, which greatly added to the sublime sight. We looked around and discovered numerous crafts, with outspread sails, directing their course to every point of the compass. Finally all eyes were stretched westwardly. We beheld in the distance, above the horizon, a long and foggy line, as of dark rising vapors and clouds. Spy glasses were then applied, a close examination made. From a hundred mouths, from one end of the vessel to the other, re-echoed the ever joyous cry, Land! Land! Land! No mistake! The ardently desired and anxiously looked for American shore appeared in view, gradually developing itself to the naked eye, as we approached. First the outline of the hills and bluffs; next the forest trees and houses; at last, men riding and walking, bands of horses and herds of cattle, were seen browsing the rich herbage in the beautiful meadows along the shore.

The deck was now literally alive with its numerous passengers, formed in groups and parties. All were seen gazing with the utmost interest and most cordially saluted the New World, the home of the oppressed! The land of Liberty! The new land of promise! For months or years past it had engrossed their whole attention, had occupied all their thoughts, yea, their whole being. There it was, unfolding itself gradually, in all its loveliness and beauty, in a succession of magnificent villas and gardens and prosperous cities and towns. No dismal thought strikes the newcomer on such an occasion and he feels happy for the moment. America is indeed an earthly Paradise to an industrious, resolute and sober man. Many realize all their expectations, nay, do even go beyond them. In every one of our great cities we find foreigners, on the first list, amongst the wealthiest, and thousands who are doing well, and surely much better than in the old country. However, as the old Proverb says: "It is not all gold that glitters." You may easily find this out, by a peep in the calaboose, the hospital, the asylum, the poorhouse, etc. They are frequently crowded with foreigners, as many as can be admitted. Tens of thousands would ask no better boon, if in their power, than to return to their old homes.

Before the end of this beautiful day, on the 7th of May, at four in the afternoon, the *Leopold* anchored before New York, near Staten Island. On the 8th we disembarked with our baggage and lodged at St. Xavier's College and at St. John's, Fordham, until the 18th. On the 19th we took the cars in New York, via Buffalo, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Terre Haute, and arrived in St. Louis on the 21st a little after noon."

Distance traveled, 7,200 miles.

1858.

Early in the year went to Leavenworth to recover body of Father Duerinck drowned in the Missouri — Went thence to St. Mary's on the Kansas river — Returned to St. Louis — May 5th received commission as Chaplain U. S. Army — Left for Leavenworth to join Harney's command destined to Utah — Went as far as the Ford of the South Platte when news was received that the Mormons had made peace with the Government — De Smet returned to Leavenworth — Went thence to St. Mary's, Kansas, and thence to St. Louis, September.

September 15th left for New York to go to Oregon with General Harney via Panama, still in the capacity of chaplain — Embarked at New York September 20th — Crossed the Isthmus on the 29th — Stopped at San Francisco October 16th and arrived at Vancouver October 28th.

November 1st started for the upper country — Visited the Dalles and Walla Walla — Arrived at the Sacred Heart Mission among the Cœur d'Alènes November 21st and remained there the rest of the year.

Distance traveled, 10,347 miles.

1859.

February 18th Father De Smet left mission of Sacred Heart and visited the Pend d'Oreilles, Kalispels, Kootenais and Flatheads — From the Flatheads set out for Fort Vancouver April 16th with nine chiefs, arriving there about

May 16th — Council with General Harney took place on 18th — Thence De Smet went to Salem to present the chiefs to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs — Later returned to Vancouver.

June 15th left Vancouver with the chiefs for the upper missions — Arrived at St. Ignatius July 16th — Left for Fort Benton July 22d and arrived there July 25th — Left Fort Benton by skiff August 3d and reached St. Louis on the 23d of September.

Distance traveled, 5,284 miles.

CHAPTER I.

OCEAN VOYAGES OF 1853 AND 1857.

A glimpse of Paris — Loses his boys — Stormy passage of the Atlantic — Neptune twice blest — Trouble with machinery — Out of coal — Shipwrecked outside Halifax — Undesirable European immigration — Boston and New York — Dangers by rail and river — Another crossing — Comfortable passage — Neptune still there — Fogs of Newfoundland — Lovely day for arrival in New York.

Shipwreck of the Humboldt.

[1]University of St. Louis, January 1, 1854.

My dear Brothers :

I PROFIT by my earliest leisure moments, to inform you that we happily arrived at our place of destination on the 27th day of December.

I wish you and your dear children a happy and prosperous New Year, and I implore God to pour down upon you daily his choicest favors and blessings. I can never forget the fraternal attachment and extreme goodness manifested to me so continually during my short visit to the land of my nativity.

I inclose you a little sketch of my long and dangerous voyage. As I am overwhelmed with business, I am forced to write in haste — *currente calamo.*

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[1] This letter to MM. Charles and Francis De Smet was also furnished by him to the *Précis Historiques,* and was reproduced in *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres* and thence translated for *Western Missions and Missionaries,* appearing as Letter VIII, Second Series, in both the latter works. The text followed is the English of *Western Missions and Missionaries.* During the month of January Father De Smet wrote this letter in turn to three different friends in Europe.

The 17th of November, the day on which I bade you farewell, will not soon be effaced from my memory. The following day I rejoined Monseigneur Miège and his companions, at Paris. The eight young men who accompanied me had only two days to allow them a cursory view of this great city, or interminable fair. They, however, visited its most splendid palaces, and its principal monuments, with the public squares of this extensive and wonderful capital, and the palaces and gardens of Versailles.

On the 2d we arrived at Havre, so as to be ready to embark thence on the morrow. The whole day was employed in collecting our trunks, boxes and cases, which were in the different offices of the port and in making preparations for our voyage. The American steamer was already in the roadstead, about two leagues from the city, and a small towboat was waiting to conduct her passengers to her. I had left my thirteen companions for an hour, to go in search of three boxes at the custom-house, and have them transported directly on board of the *Humboldt*. On my arrival at the proper place of embarking, all the passengers were there in readiness, except my company. I immediately sent some eight or ten persons in search of them, who searched all the streets and wharves of Havre for six hours, without procuring the least information concerning them. The moment named for sailing arrived! when a gendarme, to whom I had addressed myself as a last resource, and the surest after all, hastened to draw me from my embarrassment by informing me that the young gentlemen that were giving me so much solicitude had been on the *Humboldt* the last six hours, and that they also were in great anxiety concerning my delay. In a word, they had mistaken their course in the labyrinth of wharves at Havre, and thinking they had not a moment to spare, had hired two little boats to convey them to the steamer. I hastened to join them, and reached the ship at the moment they were heaving the anchor to put to sea.

I found gendarmes on board, in search of some suspected individuals. It was said that these agents had received strict orders to examine all the passports carefully. My traveling companions were all provided, except one, who had joined me in Paris, with the consent of his parents. I was not without anxiety in his regard; but our young deserter, M. M****, disguised as a cabin-boy, played his part perfectly; he held the lantern to aid the police officers in a manner to do honor to the most skillful cabin-boy, during their whole visit to the saloons and cabins. All the passengers passed in review, all the passports were minutely criticized; but the agents paid no attention to the handsome lantern-bearer, who always remained close by them, and thus quietly escaped their scrutiny. My anxiety, however, did not subside until I saw the gentlemen leave our decks.

Without a moment's delay, two discharges of cannon announce the departure of the *Humboldt*. Every officer, pilot and sailor is at his post. The whistling of the steam-engine is heard for the last time, so shrill that it penetrates the very heart of the town: it is the signal of the engineer. The captain with his speaking-trumpet orders the departure, and the steamer steers her course in the direction of Southampton and Cowes — places between the Isle of Wight and the coasts of England, where English passengers and the English mails are received. It was only in the evening of the 23d that she took the direction of New York.

For fourteen days the *Humboldt* combated against a stormy sea and violent west wind; Neptune received this time a double tribute from those who were so bold as to hazard crossing his domain in this season of the year. The greatest sufferer was Bishop Miège, who kept his bed constantly. The next was young Fortuné Hègel,[2] of Brussels, who has too weak a stomach ever to make a good sailor; he supported this misery with great fortitude, never regretting that he had left his quiet home for some years. All the others escaped tolerably; as to myself, I felt almost no inconvenience from sea-sickness during the whole voyage. To the violent storms of wind we must add several other disagreeable circumstances: the steam-engine got out of order several times, and the boilers threatened to blow us in the air; the coal was of a bad quality, and that, even, began to become scarce on the twelfth day of our voyage. We were obliged to deviate from our ordinary route, to get a supply of coal at Halifax, a seaport of Nova Scotia. This neglect on the part of the company was extremely fatal in its consequences.

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[2] Son of a glove manufacturer coming to America to finish his commercial education.

In the forenoon of the 6th of December, about five leagues from port, a fisherman presented himself on board as a pilot, and declared to the captain, who demanded his certificates, "that his papers were either in his boat, or at his own house." The captain relied upon his word, and intrusted him with the management of the ship. Against the expressed opinion of the officers, the false pilot changed the boat's direction, and notwithstanding their reiterated remonstrances, he persisted in his obstinancy. An hour and a half afterward, the *Humboldt* struck on the dangerous rocks called "The Sisters," in the neighborhood of Devil's island. It was half-past six in the morning — the greater number of the passengers were still in their berths. The shock was terrific: I was walking on the deck at the moment. Discovering directly great pieces of wood floating on the surface of the water, I hastened to warn all my companions of their danger, for they were also still in their beds. Young Hègel having been intrusted to me by his father, I took him by my side as long as the danger lasted, and kept a rope in my hand for the purpose of lowering him into the first life-boat that should be launched. All had been startled from sleep. Fear had palsied every heart; and while the water was pouring into the vessel by torrents, fire broke out. It was got under only by great exertion, through the presence of mind and manly energy of the first engineer; after great efforts, they succeeded in extinguishing it. As if all things conspired to our destruction, a fog arose, so thick that we could not see thirty paces from the vessel. The whole power of the steam-engine was exerted in an attempt to gain the shore, six miles distant. The boat soon inclined to the larboard side, where she had sprung a leak, and began to go down. Every arm set to work to aid in launching the small boats. Had not the captain[3] exhibited great presence of mind and an extraordinary firmness, there would have been much tumult and disorder. There was a rush to get in first, but happily we were not obliged to resort to this means of saving ourselves. While the greater number believed that all was lost, and I among the rest, the ship touched again, in a few fathoms of water, and rested on a rock. We were saved!

Immediately after the shipwreck, the fog arose, and we then discovered, for the first time and to our joyful surprise, that the shore was only 100 feet from us. The sea was calm, the wind lowered, and the sun rose majestically. It was the announcement of a return of fine weather, which left us at Havre de Grace, and now accompanied us until we reached Missouri. We had the good fortune and the time to save all our trunks, traveling bags and boxes. The loss of the ship and cargo was estimated at $600,000.

We had for traveling companions on the *Humboldt* Jews, Infidels and Protestants of every shade. Some of the voyagers were imbued with very strong prejudices against the Catholic faith, but in particular against Jesuits. The wreck of the *Humboldt* was even attributed to our presence, and it was maliciously proposed to oblige us to quit as soon as possible.

A few hours after the wreck, a steamboat from Halifax came to our aid. The Archbishop of that city treated us with great kindness, and insisted that Monseigneur Miège and myself should become his guests during our stay. The next morning we had the consolation of offering the sacrifice of mass in the cathedral, and my companions all received holy communion, to thank the Almighty and our Lady for having saved us amid so many perils, and especially shipwreck, where our life was in danger. Such circumstances are well suited to convince us that we are in the hands of the Lord, who protects us and preserves our life, or calls us, as he wills, before his tribunal.

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[3] Lyons, an American.

Halifax numbers about 25,000 souls, one-third of whom are Catholics, and contains three Catholic churches, two convents, and four schools.

On the 8th of December, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, after the celebration of mass, we heard that the steamship *Niagara,* of the Liverpool and Boston line, was in sight. At each trip she stops at Halifax, remaining two hours. All the passengers of the *Humboldt,* including those that we took in from England, went on board, making the total of passengers more than 400.

Among those already on the *Niagara,* was a little man, with an ape-like face and a goatish beard, who called himself Francis Tapon, a self-nominated apostle, and self-commissioned to teach a new religion to the universe. Francis declared himself an enemy of all existing creeds, but above all to the Pope and the Jesuits. When quitting Liverpool, he declared openly and aloud that he would *kill* the *first Jesuit* that he might meet on American soil! In fact, he was so violent that the captain prudently took from him his gun, pistols and poniards. The moment I set foot on the *Niagara,* I was informed of these interesting particulars. I advised my young friends to avoid Mr. Francis Tapon, and pay no sort of attention to his words or movements. He proclaimed from the deck the program of his new gospel, that "was to succeed all religions." Those who heard him shrugged their shoulders, saying, "The man is crazy." On arriving at Boston, he made several ablutions, to the great amusement of the passengers, saying that he "was washing off the last filth of Europe." Mr. Tapon at last reached the city, and we lost sight of him, without receiving a blow. He is but a fanatic more for these States, which have already unfortunately received thousands from all the various countries of Europe. These creatures begin to agitate, to harangue, to seek to change the Constitution, and make the United States a land of proscription, especially against the Catholics.

But let us resume our journey of voyage. We had fine weather, and a pleasant trip from Halifax to Boston, which we reached at night. Our Fathers received us with open arms and extraordinary charity, in which all their parishioners joined — I will add to the praise of the German congregation in particular, that during our stay at Boston they loaded our tables with poultry, choice vegetables, cakes and fruits. This parish numbers about 3,000 Catholics, and they are distinguished in the city by their piety and zeal. Although Boston contains a Catholic population of nearly 75,000 souls, there are but fifteen priests, and only four or five Catholic schools. The Sisters of Notre Dame, from Namur, have a very flourishing establishment here, and are doing immense good. Their houses in America are very successful, and their subjects are asked for in many of our large towns. In Cincinnati these good sisters teach 2,000 children and youth.

I accompanied young Hègel as far as St. John's College, at Fordham, according to the wishes of his father, who had intrusted him to my care for this purpose. We are always astonished at the rapid increase of New York, the great metropolis of the United States, in commerce and population. Its inhabitants, who number more than 700,000, are the descendants or representatives of every nation beneath the sun. The Catholics number about 200,000.

I returned to Boston on the 14th. The day following, my companions (who were quite recovered from their fatigue) and myself quitted this city. Their astonishment was unceasing at all they saw in Boston, which is styled the "Athens of America." Its commerce is very great, and its population exceeds 150,000.

We risked ourselves on the railroad, by Buffalo, Cleveland and Columbus, as far as Cincinnati — a distance of 770 miles — and passed over it in fifty-two hours, comprehending all the delays experienced at the numerous stations. We changed cars six times in this distance. Be not astonished at the word "risk," for accidents on all the routes are of frequent occurrence, and often frightful. To-day, it may be that a bridge has been left open — a hair-brained or intoxicated engineer pays no attention, and locomotive and cars are precipitated into the water; to-morrow, two trains will meet in collision, dashing into each other with all the velocity that steam can create. In a word, there are all kinds of accidents. When they occur, a list is given of the killed and disabled, which is often a very considerable one, curious inquiries are made, and some days after there is no further mention of the affair.

At Cincinnati our Fathers were most delighted to see us arriving with thirteen new and youthful companions full of fervent zeal to labor in this vast vineyard of the Lord. As we approached St. Louis, I breathed more freely; I was no longer harassed with anxiety — indeed I had but one step to take, and I should be at home. However, this "step" measured 700 miles, 530 of which were to be passed on the Ohio, and 170 on the Mississippi, and these rivers give an annual list of fearful accidents. We entered the steamer on the Ohio, and on the morning of the 21st found ourselves cordially welcomed by our Fathers of Louisville, Kentucky. Continuing our descent on the 22d, we arrived at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi without accident.

My young companions were never weary of admiring the graceful and varied scenery of the lovely Ohio, now gratifying the sight by a chain of romantic elevations, then by a succession of rich lowlands, adorned with well-cultivated and extensive farms; and the attention arrested also by a succession of flourishing villages and cities.

The Mississippi is also more dangerous than the Ohio; exacting from its navigators during the winter many precautions, for the river is then low, full of sand-banks, sawyers and floating ice. We were several times in danger, and three different times our boat ran aground, and we believed her lost. On our way we saw the wrecks of five boats. Five Lazarists, who shared our disasters in the *Humboldt*, arrived in St. Louis some days before us, but only after having undergone a second shipwreck, and having been immersed in water to the neck.

On the 26th we reached St. Louis in safety, and animated with joyful and grateful sentiments on finding ourselves at our destination. An hour after my arrival I had the comfort of celebrating mass, in thanksgiving for the special protection and blessings extended to us in our journey from Ghent to St. Louis.

Believe me, Dear Brothers,
Your devoted brother,
P. J. DE SMET.

My Dear Friend:[4]

To accomplish my promise, I hasten to give the news of our voyage. I am well aware that you will not only be pleased, but that you will expect a letter with a certain impatience.

We have just safely arrived in America, after a delightful and tranquil passage. Embarking at Antwerp on the 21st of April, we reached New York on the 7th of the month of Mary. I send you a sketch of our itinerary.

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[4] This letter was sent from New York May 15, 1857, to Father Terwecoren, to be copied for the *Précis Historiques* and forwarded to its (unnamed) destination. It was also sent from St. Louis in Flemish, to a Mr. Cuyten on the 3d of June, and in French to the Father-General about June 22d. It was published as Letter XXIII, Second Series, *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres*, and thence translated as Letter XXXVI, Second Series, *Western Missions and Missionaries.* The latter version is here followed.

The eve of our departure, we were invited to dine in the family of the worthy and honored Count Le Grelle, late Burgomaster of Antwerp, who was desirous of testifying to us on this occasion, as he did on several other departures of missionaries, the deep interest which he takes in our cherished American missions. The day of our departure, he was so kind as to accompany us as far as the port. A great number of other persons, and several of our near and dear relatives also, came to the quay, to bid us a last adieu and wish us a successful voyage.

They weighed anchor between nine and ten in the morning. The weather was superb. The large and beautiful ship, *Leopold I*, was full of animation. A multitude of emigrants, from Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Belgium, Russia, France, etc., etc., were already on board, and were occupied with an infinity of petty cares and arrangements, in order to render the long passage agreeable, or, as the English say, *comfortable*. The sailors, attentive to the word of command, and every one at his post, were making the latest preparations for setting sail.

We took but a day to reach Southampton, and remained there until the next day, to take in English and Irish passengers. Our number increased then to more than 620 persons. During the whole of this day the air resounded with the songs of the Germans and Hollanders, collected on the deck; several parties executed dances, to the sound of the violin and guitar; our main-deck resembled a floating village at the Kermesse. But fine things never endure long, and here follows a proof.

Scarcely had we lost sight of the Isle of Wight, than the scene assumed a new aspect. We found the sea in extraordinary agitation. Although the wind was tolerably moderate, and the weather sufficiently fine, the swell shook the ship with violence, bearing us now on the summit of the highest waves, and then precipitating us into an abyss, between the turbulent and foaming surges which rose mountain high around us. It was an agitation which succeeded a tempest, or many heavy contradictory winds, which had passed, a short time before, in our neighborhood. That day resembled a genuine day of mourning; the songs and dances ceased; no animation or vivacity was exhibited anywhere; the table was almost deserted; hunger and gayety made their exit together. Here and there might be seen groups of men, women and children, with sinister faces and haggard eyes, pale and wan as spectres, leaning over the vessel's side, as though making some hasty communication to the sea. Those especially who had reveled most freely, and perhaps looked too deeply into the wine cup, wore the most melancholy and lengthened faces; they looked absolutely like old parchment — *franzyne gezichten*. Neptune was at his post; this inexorable toll-gatherer exacted the very last portion of his tribute; willingly or unwillingly, it must be paid; and, remark it well, how contradictory the humor of the stern sea-king, for we leave the table after dessert, but he requires the list exactly reversed, from dessert to the initiatory course of soup.

Though this was my eleventh trip across the Atlantic, I was not exempted from the general sea-sickness. I endeavored to resist, but all in vain. I was, therefore, obliged humbly to submit, and share the common misery. The old adage says, "violent sufferings do not last long," hence the indisposed insensibly recovered, and we had no deaths to mourn. We had a worthy and excellent physician on board, Monsieur Themont; he was on his feet night and day, and lavished his cares on all indiscriminately.

This little shadow past, the remainder of the passage was unclouded. The weather was favorable from that day forward. The winds were sometimes a little contrary, but the ocean was calm and tranquil, until within six days' distance from New York.

I had the consolation of saying mass every day in my cabin. My young companions frequently received, and several of the emigrants enjoyed the same happy privilege. You would have been edified had you seen our little altar, neatly adorned and surmounted with a pretty little statue of the Blessed Virgin, garlanded with flowers that some ladies from Holland had removed from their bonnets. On Sunday I said mass in the grand saloon, where more than a hundred persons could conveniently find places; several Protestants asked permission to be present. Hymns were sung, during the sacrifice, in French, Latin, Dutch and German. It was certainly a rare spectacle on the ocean, where one is much more habituated to hearing blasphemies than the praises of God.

On the 2d day of May, when near the Banks of Newfoundland, the sea became covered with a dense fog. It continued thus during four days, so that the captain could not make an observation. We could not distinguish anything a few feet from the boat. The misfortunes of the *Lyonnais* and of the *Arctic*[5] are still recent. We were in continual danger of coming in contact with some sailing vessel pursuing the same route. As a precaution, the great whistle of the steam engine was heard day and night, in its loudest and most piercing tones, in order to give the alarm to vessels which might be in our passage. By means of this manœuvre we were able to advance with our ordinary rapidity, ten or twelve knots, or four leagues, an hour.

However, as we were rapidly approaching land, and the fog increasing in intensity, it appeared that we were progressing more or less at random; and as the observations of the meridian had become impossible, we were not without anxiety. We, therefore, had recourse to heaven, and we said our beads together, with the litany of our Blessed Mother, and some special prayers to obtain, by the intercession of the souls in purgatory, a serene sky. Our prayers appear to have been heard. Some hours after, the fogs had vanished, and we had one of the most glorious evenings that can be witnessed at sea. The full moon, reflected on the waves, shone in its splendor from the starry and cloudless firmament. The next day the sun rose majestically. We saw a great number of vessels sailing toward every point of the compass. At last, all eyes being turned toward the west, we descried in the distance, above the horizon, as it were, a long train of rising mists. The officers apply the spyglass and announce that those are the much-desired coasts of America! Songs and exclamations of joy were simultaneously offered by all hearts. The emigrants, grouped upon the upper deck, all saluted the New World, the land of promise, which bore in its bosom all their hopes and all their future prospects. As the objects and shores presented themselves more distinctly to view my young companions could not satisfy their longing eyes at the view of that land, to the salvation of which they came to devote their lives, and on which they will be, I trust, instruments of salvation to thousands of neglected souls. Before the close of that lovely day, the 7th of the month of Mary, we found ourselves, at four o'clock in the afternoon, in the roadstead off Staten Island, in the bay of New York.

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[5] Wrecked on these coasts in 1856 with considerable loss of life.

One duty remained for us to fulfil. In the name of all the passengers of the first and second cabin, who amounted to more than a hundred persons, I presented to the worthy commandant of the steamship, Monsieur Achille Michel, and to all his officers, a document signed by all, to express our cordial gratitude and sincere thanks for their assiduous attentions, their great kindness and politeness in regard to all the passengers; and, at the same time, to compliment them for their naval skill in the management of the large and noble ship, *Leopold I.* In all my sea voyages, I have never met a commandant more capable, and officers more attentive to their charges. The whole crew was well selected and perfectly organized. It is rare to find sailors more tranquil, laborious and respectful. The names of Messrs. Edward Michel, commander; Justius William Luning, first mate; Louis Delmer, second mate; Julius Nyssens, third mate; Leopold Grosfels, fourth mate; Augustus Themont, surgeon, and Edward Kremer, engineer, will always be dear to us. We also pay a tribute of respectful thanks to Messrs. Posno and Spillaerdts, of Antwerp, for their assiduous attentions to us before embarking, and for all the precautions which they so kindly took to render this long voyage pleasant. Most cheerfully we wish the happiest success to the great and noble enterprise of the Atlantic Steamship Company of Antwerp.

On arriving in New York, our dear brethren of St. Xavier's College, New York, and of St. John's College, at Fordham, near the city, gave us a most hearty reception, pleased at seeing a new reinforcement to the apostolic work in America. Beautiful and vast America, so superb in all its natural features, is in pressing need of fervent, holy and zealous missionaries! The thousands of Catholic emigrants who seek a home on her shores from year to year, render her penury, in this respect, more afflicting and melancholy. Ah! may the generous hearts of Catholics in Holland and in Belgium continue to be moved with an increasing compassion for so many thousands of souls, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, who are deprived of pastors and of the consolations of religion. May they not cease sending new troops of young missionaries, filled with a thirst for the salvation of their neighbor. The harvest is great; the Father of the family only waits for the harvesters. No country in the world has in prospect so magnificent a future. How happy, if she can be induced to acknowledge the true Church, which alone can make us happy here below and secure us a happy eternity, for which we have all been created and redeemed.

CHAPTER II.

THE MORMON EXPEDITION OF 1858.[1]

Appointment as Army Chaplain — The Mormon troubles — Fort Leavenworth — Progress of Kansas — Fort Kearney — An Indian scalp-fight — A buffalo hunt — Freighting on the plains — Discouraging for the Indians — Mormons escaping from Utah — Conclusion of peace puts an end to the expedition.

St. Louis University, May 9, 1858.

Right Reverend and Dear Father:

GENERAL HARNEY is now in St. Louis with General Smith. I paid him a visit at the Planter's House. He seems really to have been in earnest in asking for a Catholic chaplain for the Utah army. He assured me that I will receive my commission within two or three days. Should it come, I shall immediately make ready for the trip. I hope Reverend Father Provincial will give me a companion. I shall do my best to obtain one. I was just preparing for my journey among the tribes of the upper Missouri. Both ends may perhaps be accomplished in this and the following year, should obedience allow me. I may soon see your Reverence in Leavenworth City.

St. Louis University, May 18, 1858.

Right Reverend and Dear Father:

I received, last evening, my appointment as chaplain to the army of Utah, from the Secretary of War.

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[1] Father De Smet wrote several accounts of his travels in 1858-59, in both French and English, for various correspondents in both hemispheres. When he decided, in 1861, to publish another book, he had a set of his French letters translated for the purpose, by Mr. Robert A. Bakewell, of St. Louis; and the volume called *New Indian Sketches* was the result. This is the text followed here. It had previously appeared in French in the *Précis Historiques.*

You may as yet remember, that in my trip to Leavenworth last December, I met Mr. Murphy, brother to our friend Colonel Murphy. We conversed then together on my probable trip to Utah and he seemed to relish the idea of accompanying me thither. In case your Reverence should approve of this selection and should Mr. Murphy be as yet willing to undertake the voyage, I think we may easily come to a proper understanding as to terms; and you will please inform him, if he resides at Leavenworth or its vicinity.

It is probable I shall proceed from Utah to the Flathead Mission to confer with the Fathers about a new establishment among the Blackfeet. There are fair prospects to bring it about. The Government appears favorably disposed. The Rocky Mountain missions have been separated from California. In a letter dated 18th of April, Father Congiato writes to me that he has been appointed Superior exclusively for these missions; he is already on his way thither.

I shall leave St. Louis for Leavenworth in the course of the present week.

St. Louis University, May 18, 1858.

Honorable Sir:

I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of your communication of the 13th instant, informing me of my appointment as chaplain to the army for Utah.

It is indeed with the utmost diffidence in my own humble abilities that I feel myself constrained by a sense of duty to accept a charge of such responsibility. Trusting, however, to the Divine Assistance, I shall endeavor faithfully to comply with the duties of the office assigned me.

Allow me to beg the favor of you, Honorable Sir, to convey to the President my sincere thanks for the very distinguished honor which he has thought proper to confer upon me. I shall immediately make ready to repair to the headquarters of General Smith, as directed in your letter.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
P. J. DE SMET, S. J.

Honorable JOHN B. FLOYD,
Secretary of War,
Washington City, D. C.

St. Louis, Nov. 1, 1859.

Reverend and Dear Father:

In accordance with your request, I proceed with great pleasure to give you some details of my recent journey.

On the 20th of May, 1858, I set out from St. Louis for the western portion of North America, and after an absence of about sixteen months, I returned to the point whence I set out. During this interval, I had accompanied, as chaplain, an army sent out by the United States against the Mormons and the savages. I propose to give you some details of this double expedition. Not to fatigue you, I will endeavor to be brief. At best, however, my narrative will fill some pages, as my recent voyage has been very long. It exceeded 15,000 English miles, or 5,000 leagues. I propose then to give you some details in regard to the different countries I have traversed, and the seas I have crossed, and of my visit to the savage tribes, my dear spiritual children of the Rocky Mountains, the Cœur d'Alènes, Kalispels, Pend d'Oreilles, Flatheads and Kootenais, of my stay among the different tribes of the Great Plains of the Upper Missouri, and of the manner in which my time was spent in the army of the United States in quality of chaplain, and envoy extraordinary of that Government. These details, I venture to hope, will not be without interest for you, and they will form the subject of my little sketch.

Several years have passed, since the Mormons, that terrible sect of modern fanatics, flying from civilization, settled in the midst of an uninhabited wilderness. With hearts full of hate and bitterness, they never ceased on every occasion which presented itself to agitate the country, provoke the inhabitants, and commit acts of robbery and murder against many travelers and adventurers from the United States. In September, 1857, 120 emigrants from Arkansas, men, women and children, are said to have been horribly massacred by the Mormons, in a place called the Mountain Meadows. These fanatics never ceased to defy the Government, and announced that the day had arrived to avenge the death of their prophet Joseph and his brother, and to retaliate the wrongs and acts of injustice and cruelty of which they pretended to have been the victims in the States of Missouri and Illinois, whence they had been forcibly expelled by the inhabitants.

On two different occasions, the Governor and subaltern officers, sent by the President of the United States, had met with such strong opposition from the Mormons in the attempt to accomplish their respective duties, that they were forced to quit the Territory of Utah, and to return to lay their complaints before the President. Congress resolved to send a third Governor, accompanied, this time, by 2,000 soldiers, who were to be followed by from 2,000 to 4,000 others in the following spring of 1858. I accompanied the last-named expedition. On the 15th of May, 1858, the Secretary of war wrote to me as follows:

"The President is desirous to engage you to attend the army for Utah, to officiate as chaplain. In his opinion your services would be important in many respects to the public interest, particularly in the present condition of our affairs in Utah. Having sought information as to the proper person to be thus employed, his attention has been directed to you, and he has instructed me to address you on the subject, in the hope that you may consider it not incompatible with your clerical duties or your personal feelings to yield to his request," etc.

The Reverend Father Provincial and all the other consultors, considering the circumstances, expressed themselves in favor of my accepting.[2] I immediately set out for Fort Leavenworth, Kansas Territory, to join the army at that point. On the very day of my arrival I took my place in the Seventh Regiment, composed of 800 men, under the command of the excellent Colonel Morrison, whose staff was composed of a numerous body of superior officers of the line and engineers. General Harney, the commander-in-chief, and one of the most distinguished and most valiant generals of the United States, with great courtesy, installed me himself in my post. The brave colonel, though a Protestant, thanked him very heartily. "General," said he, "I thought myself highly honored when intrusted with the command of the engineers: to have attached to my command a representative of the ancient and venerable church, I hold as an additional favor." General Harney then shook hands with me, with great kindness, bade me welcome to the army, and assured me that I should be left perfectly free in the exercise of my holy ministry among the soldiers. He kept his word most loyally, and in this he was seconded by all the officers. During the whole time that I was among them, I never met with the slightest obstacle in the discharge of my duties. The soldiers had always free access to my tent for confession and instruction. I had frequently the consolation of celebrating the holy sacrifice of the mass early in the morning, and on each occasion a large number of soldiers devoutly approached the holy table.

A word or two in regard to the character of the countries through which we passed will perhaps be agreeable to you. I left Fort Leavenworth on the 1st of June, 1858, in the Seventh Regiment, commanded by the worthy Colonel Morrison. I had an opportunity of observing with admiration the extraordinary rapidity of the progress of civilization in Kansas. A space of 276 miles was already in great part occupied by white settlers. No further back than 1851, at the time of my return from the Great Council, held on the borders of the Platte or Nebraska river, the plains of Kansas were almost entirely without inhabitants, containing only a few scattered villages of Indians, living for the most part by the chase, by fishing and on wild fruits and roots. But eight years have made an entire change: many towns and villages have sprung up, as it were, by enchantment; forges and mills of every kind are already very numerous; extensive and beautiful farms have been established in all directions with extraordinary rapidity and industry.

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[2] Father De Smet had planned a missionary journey up the Missouri for this year, but concluded he would combine that work with his chaplaincy, as the following letters show.

The face of the country is entirely changed. In 1851, the antelope, the wild deer and the wild goat bounded at liberty over these extensive plains, nor is it much longer ago that these fields were the pasture of enormous herds of buffaloes; to-day they are in the possession of numerous droves of horned cattle, sheep and hogs, horses and mules. The fertile soil rewards a hundredfold the labors of the husbandman. Wheat, corn, barley, oats, flax, hemp, all sorts of garden stuff and all the fruits of the temperate zone, are produced there in abundance. Emigration tends thither, and commerce follows in its tracks and acquires new importance every day.

Leavenworth is the principal town of Kansas Territory. It contains already about 10,000 souls, though it has sprung into existence within the last six years. It is beautifully and advantageously situated on the Missouri river. It has a bishop, two Catholic churches, a convent with a boarding-school and a day-school. There are already fifteen churches, twenty-three stations, sixteen priests, five religious communities, and four manual-labor schools for the Osage and Potawatomi Indians, which are under the care of our fathers and religious ladies of different orders.

The greater portion of the Territory is not thickly wooded: the surface of the country, as a general thing, is rolling and well adapted to agriculture; it is not unlike the billows of a vast ocean, suddenly arrested in its flow and converted into solid land. The air is fresh and wholesome. As one rises with the elevations of the soil, the graceful undulation of the alternating vale and hill contrast admirably with the waving lines of walnut trees, oaks and poplars which mark the course of each little river. The banks of each stream are generally more or less thickly wooded. We ascended the valley of the Little Blue for three days, making a distance of fifty-three miles. The names of the principal plants which attract the attention of the botanist in the plains of Kansas, are: the *anothera,* with its brilliant yellow flowers, the *amorpha* and *artemisia,* the *commelina,* the blue and purple *lupin,* different forms and species of *cactus,* the *tradescantia,* the *mimosa,* and the white *mimulus.* The waters of the Little Blue are left at a distance of 275 miles from Fort Leavenworth.

Continuing the route from that point, you cross elevated prairies for a distance of twenty-six miles, and enter the great valley of the Nebraska or Platte river, at a distance of fifteen miles from Fort Kearney. This river, up to its two forks, is about 3,000 yards wide; its waters are yellowish and muddy in the spring freshets, and resemble those of the Missouri and the Mississippi; it is not so deep as those streams; its current is very rapid. Fort Kearney is rather insignificant. It consists of three or four frame houses and several made of *adobes,* a kind of coarse brick baked in the sun. The Government has a military post there for the tranquillity of the country, and to provide for the safety of travelers crossing the desert to go to California, Oregon and the Territories of Utah and Washington.

A great number of Pawnee Indians were encamped at a little distance from the fort. I came near witnessing a battle between them and a war-party of Arapahos, who, favored by the night, had succeeded in approaching the camp unseen almost forty strong. The Pawnees had just let their horses loose at break of day, when the enemy, with loud cries, rushed into the drove, and carried away many hundreds with them at full gallop. The alarm immediately spread throughout the camp. The Pawnees, indifferently armed and almost naked, rushed to the pursuit of the Arapahos, caught up with them, and a combat more noisy than bloody took place. A young Pawnee chief, the most impetuous of his band, was killed and three of his companions wounded. The Arapahos lost one killed and many wounded. Desirous to stop the combat, I hurried to the scene of battle with an aide-de-camp of the general, but all was over when we arrived; the Pawnees were returning with their dead and wounded and all the stolen horses. On their return to camp, nothing was heard but cries of sorrow, rage and despair, with threats and vociferations against their enemies. It was a harrowing scene. The deceased warrior was decorated and painted with all the marks of distinction of a great brave, and loaded with his finest ornaments. They placed him in the grave amid the acclamations and lamentations of the whole tribe.

The next day the Pawnee Loups invited me to their camp. I found there two French Creoles, old acquaintances of mine, of the Rocky Mountains. They received me with the greatest kindness, and desired to act as my interpreters. I had a long conference on religion with these poor, unhappy savages. They listened with the most earnest attention. After the instruction they presented to me 208 little children, and very earnestly begged me to regenerate them in the holy waters of baptism. These savages have been the terror of travelers obliged to pass through their territory; for many years their character has been that of thieves, drunkards and ruffians, and they are brutalized by drink, which they readily obtain, owing to their proximity to the frontiers of civilization. This accursed traffic has always and everywhere been the ruin of the Indian tribes, and it leads to their rapid extinction.

Two days' march above Fort Kearney, at a place called Cottonwood Springs, I found thirty lodges of Ogallalas, a Sioux or Dakota tribe. At their request I baptized all their children. In 1851, at the Great Council on the Platte, I had brought them the same blessing. They told me that a great number of their children had died since, carried off by epidemics which had raged among the nomadic tribes of the plains. They are much consoled at the thought of the happiness which children obtain by holy baptism. They know its high importance, and appreciate it as the greatest favor which they can receive.

General Harney had many friendly conferences with the Pawnees, the Ogallalas and the Cheyennes, in which he strongly advised them to cease molesting the whites who might pass through their borders, adding that on this condition alone could they remain at peace with the United States.

I have so often spoken of the buffalo in my letters, that this time I might pass him by in silence. However, I will mention it for the purpose of saying that the race is not extinct in these parts, though it is becoming more rare to find buffalo on the highway across the plains, which its instinct must have taught it to avoid. We met our first herds of this noble animal in the neighborhood of Fort Kearney. The sight created great excitement among those soldiers who had not visited the plains before, and they burned to bring down one or two. Armed, as they were, with the famous Minié rifles, they might have made a good hunt, had they not been on foot, while the buffalo were mounted; it was, therefore, impossible to get near them. They fired, however, at a distance of 200 or 300 yards. A single buffalo was wounded in the leg. Its wound compelled it to lag behind, and it became the target of all our men. A confused sound of cries and rifle shots arose, as if the last hour had come for the last buffalo. Riddled with balls, his tongue lolling out, the blood streaming from his throat and nostrils, the poor brute fell at last. To cut him up and distribute the meat was the work of a moment. Never was buffalo more rapidly transformed into steak and soup,— every one would have his piece.

While these things were going on, Captain P——, mounted on a fine horse, approached a bull, already terrified by the rifle shots and the terrible noise of our soldiers, who were novices to the chase, and fired at him twice almost point blank. The buffalo and the horse stopped at the same instant. In spite of all his efforts, Captain P——— could not make his horse, unaccustomed to the hunt, advance a single step, and the furious buffalo plunged both horns into his flank and threw him down dead. In this critical moment the courageous rider did not lose his presence of mind: he leaped from his horse over the buffalo's back, gave him two more bullets from his six-shooter, and completely baffled him. The captain then fled to a gully, which was luckily both deep and near at hand. The buffalo, unable to follow him, abandoned his persecutor, who returned to camp with his horse's saddle on his back. A horse must be well trained to hunt the buffalo, and must be trained specially for buffalo hunting: otherwise the danger is very great, and the consequence may be fatal.

During the months of June and July, tempests and falls of rain and hail are very frequent, and almost of daily occurrence, toward evening in the valley of the Platte, which is the country of storms and whirlwinds *par excellence.* The gathering of these storms can be noticed at a great distance, as at sea. At first, light spots of clouds are observed on the horizon, which are followed by dark masses of cloud, which move along in succession, crowding one upon another, and spreading over the sky with extraordinary rapidity, they approach and cross each other; they burst and pour forth torrents of water, which drench the valleys, or volleys of hail which crush the herbs and flowers; the storm-clouds then disappear as rapidly as they have come. "Every evil has its remedy," says the old proverb, and these hurricanes, storms and heavy rains serve the purpose of cooling and purifying the atmosphere, which at this season would become insupportable but for this circumstance. The mercury often rises to 100° of Fahrenheit in the shade. The water does not rest long on the surface of the soil: it is absorbed almost as it falls, on account of the very porous character of the earth of the valley and its sandy bottom. Travelers, in camps a little removed from the river, always dig wells; the water is everywhere found at a depth of two or three feet. This water, though cold and clear, must be unwholesome, and frequently causes severe sickness.

Graves abound in these regions, and the mortal remains of a vast number of emigrants repose there. With these emigrants have also sunk beneath the valley of the Platte that ardent thirst for gold, those desires and ambitious projects for wealth, greatness and pleasure, which devoured them, and drove them toward the distant regions of California, Pike's Peak and Frazer. Death met them far from their Penates, and they are buried in these desert strands. How uncertain are the affairs of this world! Man makes his plans; he builds his castles in the air; he counts upon a future which does not belong to him: he proposes, but God disposes, and cuts the thread of life in the midst of these vain hopes.

The most remarkable thing that I met on this occasion on the highway of the prairies, ordinarily so lonely, were the long wagon trains engaged in transporting to Utah provisions and stores of war. If the journals of the day may be believed, these cost the Government fifteen millions. Each train consisted of twenty-six wagons, each wagon drawn by six yoke of oxen, and containing near 5,000 pounds. The quartermaster-general made the calculation, and told me that the whole train would make a line of about fifty miles. We passed every day some wagons of this immense train. Each wagon is marked with a name as in the case of ships, and these names served to furnish amusement to the passer-by; the caprices of the captains in this respect having imposed upon the wagons such names as the *Constitution*, the *President*, the *Great Republic*, the *King of Bavaria*, *Lola Montes*, *Louis Napoleon*, *Dan O'Connell*, *Old Kentuck*, etc., etc. These were daubed in great letters on each side of the carriage. On the plains, the wagoner assumes the style of *captain*, being placed in command of his wagon and twelve oxen. The master-wagoner is admiral of this little land fleet: he has control of twenty-six captains and 312 oxen. At a distance, the white awnings of the wagons have the effect of a fleet of vessels with all canvas spread.

On leaving Leavenworth the drivers look well enough, being all in new clothes, but as they advance into the plains their good clothes become travel-stained and torn, and at last are converted into rags. The *captains* have hardly proceeded 200 miles, before their trail is marked with rags, scattered and flying along the route. You may often remark also on the various camping grounds, even as far as the Rocky Mountains, and beyond, the wrecks of wagons and the skeletons of oxen, but especially the remains of the wardrobe of the traveler: legs of pantaloons and drawers, a shirt-bosom, the back or the arm of a flannel vest, stockings out at toe and heel, crownless hats, and shoes worn through in the soles or uppers, are strewed along the route. These deserted camps are also marked by packs of cards strewed round among broken jars and bottles; here you see a gridiron, a coffee-pot or a tin bowl; there a cooking-stove and the fragments of a shaving-dish, all worn out and cast aside.

The poor Indians regard these signs of encroaching civilization with an unquiet eye as they pass them on their way. These rags and refuse are to them the harbingers of the approach of a dismal future for themselves; they announce to them that the plains and forests over which they roam in the chase, their beautiful lakes and rivers swarming with fish, and the repair of numerous aquatic birds; the hearth which witnessed their birth, and the soil which covers the ashes of their fathers — all, in fine, that is most dear to them — are about to pass into the hands of the rapacious white man: and they, poor mortals, accustomed to roam at large and over a vast space, free like the birds of the air, will be inclosed in narrow reserves, far from their cherished hunting grounds and fine fisheries, far from their fields of roots and fruits; or driven back into the mountains or to unknown shores. It is not surprising, then, that the savage seeks sometimes to revenge himself on the white man; it is rarely, however, that he is the aggressor: surely, not once out of ten provoking cases.

The wagons are formed every evening into a *corral.* That is, the whole twenty-six are ranged in a circle, and chained one to the other, so as to leave only one opening, to give passage to the beasts, which pass the night in the centre, and are guarded there by several sentinels under arms. Under the protection of a small number of determined men, the wagons and animals are secure from any attack of undisciplined Indians, in however great numbers. When the travelers neglect this precaution, and camp at random, not unfrequently a hostile band of Indians will provoke what is called a *stampede,* or panic among the cattle, and carry them all off at once. The travelers go into camp early, and at break of day the beasts are let loose in the prairie that they may have plenty of time to graze. Grass is very abundant in the valley of the Platte, and on the neighboring acclivities.

Between Fort Kearney and the crossing of the South Fork of the Platte, we met over 100 families of Mormons on their way to Kansas and Missouri, with the intention of settling there. They appeared delighted at being fortunate enough to leave, safe and sound, the famous promised land of Utah; thanks to the influence of the new Governor, and the presence of the United States troops. They told us that a great number of other families would follow them, so soon as they should be capable of doing so and of procuring the necessary means for the journey. They confessed that they would have escaped long before, had they not been afraid of falling into the hands of the Danites, or Destroying Angels. These compose the bodyguard of the Prophet; they are said to be entirely and blindly at his disposal, to carry out all his plans, meet all his wishes and execute all his measures, which often involve robbery and murder. Before the arrival of the United States soldiers, woe to any one who manifested a desire to leave Utah, or abandon the sect; woe to him who dared to raise a voice against the actions of the Prophet — they rarely escaped the poniards of these Destroying Angels, or rather incarnate demons.

The highway of the plains, during the beautiful season of 1858, appeared, as it were, invaded by an unusual and joyous animation. To complete the idea which I have just given, I will add that couriers and express messengers, coming and returning, constantly crossed each other on the road. The different companies of the army left a space of two or three days' journey between them. Each company was followed by ambulances for the use of the superior officers, a body of artillery and engineers, and a train of wagons, with six mules each, transporting provisions and baggage. Each company was followed also by an immense drove of six or seven hundred horned cattle, to furnish their daily food. Uncle Sam, as the Government of the United States is called, has a truly paternal heart; he provides abundantly for the wants of the defenders of the country, and will not suffer them to want their comforts.

Everything was going on admirably and in good order. The commanding general and staff were already at the crossing of the south branch of the Platte, 480 miles from Fort Leavenworth, when he received the news that the Mormons had submitted, or laid down their arms, and at the same time an order to distribute his troops to other points, and return to the United States. This also changed my destination; the conclusion of peace put an end to my little diplomatic mission to the Indian tribes of Utah. I consulted with the general, and accompanied him on his return to Leavenworth.

The South Fork of the Platte, at the crossing, is 2,045 feet wide. In the month of July, its depth is generally about three feet, after the junction of the two forks, the width is about 3,000 yards. The bottom, throughout the whole length, is sandy.

I could say much, dear Father, about the country between Leavenworth and the South Fork of the Platte, its botanical and other properties and productions, but I have spoken of these on many occasions in my letters describing other journeys across this region. The little incidents mentioned in this letter are all connected with my last trip.

Before leaving Fort Leavenworth for St. Louis, I made a little excursion of seventy miles to visit our dear fathers and brothers of the Mission of St. Mary among the Potawatomies. I at last reached St. Louis in the beginning of September, after a first absence of about three months, and after a journey, to and fro, of 1,976 miles. My stay in St. Louis was short. I will, in my next letter, give you details, which will inform you as to the particulars of the long expedition of which I speak in the first part of this letter.

CHAPTER III.

THE OREGON EXPEDITION OF 1858–9.[1]

De Smet's resignation not accepted — Indian uprising in the Northwest — New York to Aspinwall — Notes on the Isthmus — Up the Pacific — Acapulco — San Francisco's rapid growth — The Big Trees of Calaveras — Over the bar of the Columbia again — Changes in the country — Indian hostages at Fort Walla Walla — Their piety — They accompany Father De Smet — Journey to the Cœur d'Alène Lake.

From St. Louis to Oregon.

MY last letter told you of a journey of some sixteen months, in which I accompanied, in the capacity of chaplain, an army corps sent out on a twofold errand; against the Mormons and against the Indians. I gave you an account of the first in the narrative of my three-months' travels across the New Kansas; and promised you information regarding the second, to complete my tale of a journey of 5,000 leagues.

I will briefly indicate the cause of the war waged by the United States upon the western Indians, and then take you with me across the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea to the celebrated Isthmus of Panama.

At the beginning of September, 1858, I sought to resign the post of chaplain which I had occupied in the Utah expedition. The Secretary of War did not see fit to accept my resignation, in consequence of fresh difficulties which had arisen west of the Rocky Mountains. There the Indian tribes had formed a powerful league against the whites; they had surprised Colonel Steptoe and had killed two of his officers and several soldiers; a general uprising was imminent in all that region. Nine tribes had already entered into the coalition, namely, the Palooses, Yakimas, Skoyelpis, Okinagans, Spokans, Cœur d'Alènes, Kalispels, Kootenais and Flatheads. These poor savages, formerly so peaceable, the last four especially, had become very uneasy over the frequent incursions made by the whites upon the lands in the southern and western portions of the Territories of Washington and Oregon. From uneasiness, they had soon passed to displeasure and anger, when they saw these adventurers taking possession of the most advantageous sites and settling as owners upon the most fertile parts of the country, in total contempt of their rights and without the slightest preliminary agreement.

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[1] Written in Brussels in March, 1861, for publication in the *Précis Historiques.* Published as Letter II in Volume V of the third Belgian edition.

The mountain tribes had become especially stirred up, and had resolved to drive back the whites, or at least to make resistance to their progressive encroachments. Bands were quickly formed in various places; these came together, began drilling, and in a few days a body of 800 to 1,000 warriors was organized. Their first blow was a victory for them, and in their eyes a complete one, for they had not only driven off the enemy but had besides captured his train and provisions. The precipitate retreat of the Americans even seemed to them a shameful flight. It was, however, a perfectly natural thing, since the brave Colonel Steptoe, having no suspicion of the rising, had with him only one company of 120 men, on their way to maintain order at Colville. Intoxicated with their first success, the Indians thought themselves invincible and able to meet the whole United States army.

On the other side, the Government thought the affair of sufficient gravity to make it prudent to put it in the hands of General Harney. This officer had won glory on many occasions in the famous Indian wars, in Florida, Texas, Mexico and the plains of the West. He wished to have me with him on this distant expedition, and at his express request, the Secretary of War invited me to go accordingly.

After ascertaining that it was agreeable to my superiors, I consented to retain my position of army chaplain in the new army. I hoped to be of some service in that capacity to the men, but above all to the Indian tribes of the mountains; I desired greatly also to be in touch with my missionary brethren in the difficulties which the war would doubtless bring upon them.

On the 15th of September, I left St. Louis by the central line of railroad; in fifty hours, I had covered 1,100 miles and reached New York. My arrangements were quickly made, and on the 20th I embarked, together with the general and his staff, on the steamer *Star of the West*. Our first destination was Aspinwall, a small place on the northern side of the Isthmus of Panama, about 2,000 miles from New York. We made this distance in eight days and a few hours. It was the time of the equinox, and we were accordingly accompanied by high winds, squalls and some small tempests, especially among the dangerous Bahama islands. There was nothing extraordinary on board, unless it were the countenances of the numerous victims of the inexorable Neptune. Aside from this, the trip was a very fortunate one; no serious case of sickness appeared on board, which is quite unusual in the tropics. The passengers were 640 in number, bound mainly for California, the great Eldorado of the West. The route of our vessel was as follows; you can easily trace it on the map:

We passed through the Bahama islands, of which there are more than 600, including that of Guanahani, or San Salvador, the first land touched by Columbus, on October 12, 1492. We coasted the Long, Crooked and Fortunate islands; we admired Maysi Point, the eastern tip of the island of Cuba, and at the same time we perceived Cape St. Nicholas and other points of San Domingo. After this we passed in sight of Jamaica, which brought us into the Caribbean Sea, which stretches 1,600 miles from north to south. Presently Aspinwall appeared, not far from Porto Bello.

Aspinwall is only about five years old. It cannot fail to become a very important place, commercially; the passage of emigrants, the greater number of them bound for California, is at present the principal basis of its prosperity. Its population is made up of various races, from the purest whites to the solid black of the finest of negroes, and including the various shades of the Indian peoples. One part of the village is marshy, which must render it unwholesome; but this serious disadvantage will soon have been remedied.

The Isthmus of Panama is thirty-six miles in width, and the railroad that joins the two oceans forty-seven in length. This railroad may be cited as a wonder, for the boldness of the undertaking and the success with which it was carried out. It traverses dense forests and crosses one handsome river, over which a bridge of the most solid construction has been thrown. It is indeed a gigantic work and must have cost an enormous sum. How many European workmen, attracted by greed of gain, have come to this burning climate in search of fortune, and found nothing but death!

There is no sign of human habitation along the way, save two or three little villages, consisting of a few poor huts of bamboo. The children wear scarcely any clothing; grown persons are covered, but very lightly. Their food consists mainly of vegetables and fruits, which are very abundant and grow almost without cultivation.

Formerly, to reach the farther shore, it was necessary to travel three or four days afoot or on horseback, amid privations and difficulties of every kind. To-day you are softly transported in less than three hours from Aspinwall to Panama. During the short ride, I admired a charming and graceful little flower with a white centre and purple petals. It bears a deceiving resemblance to a very young dove with outspread wings. Head, eyes, bill, nothing is lacking, except the feet. The Spanish have named it, very properly, the Flower of the Holy Spirit. It is indeed a very remarkable country, with respect to flowers, plants and trees; the vegetable growths are really extraordinary. What a vast field, hardly explored as yet, for a bold and zealous botanist!

New Granada occupies the northwestern portion of South America, between the Pacific Ocean and the Orinoco River. The Isthmus of Panama forms part of it, as well as all the countries that run westward as far as Central America. The Andes run lengthwise along the western coast and in the southern part of the Republic divide into three portions. East of the mountains lie vast plains, which abound in horses and other domestic animals. The climate and products of New Granada vary with the elevation. Wheat, barley and the fruits of the temperate zones grow in the higher portions, while toward the sea-coasts and in the lower parts, the finest products of the tropical regions are found in abundance.

Commerce is not yet very extensively developed; it is carried on principally with the United States and England. Sugar, cocoa, cotton and hides are exported; there are mines of gold, silver, platinum and copper, but they are rather scanty. Roads are rare in the mountainous districts. If the traveler wishes to visit them, and can afford it, he hires a kind of chair and is carried by men, called *silleteros.* Bridges consist often of a mere rope with a hammock or basket attached. The traveler gets into this, if he wishes to reach the opposite bank; for that matter, he runs little risk, even in crossing rapid torrents in this manner.

Under Bolivar's presidency, New Granada, Venezuela and Ecuador formed the Republic of Colombia; it is only since 1830 that these three countries have constituted independent States. Santa Fe de Bogota, the capital of New Granada, is not far from the Magdalena river; it lies upon a very lofty plateau, in the centre of which the Bogota makes a fall of over 500 feet in height, called the cascade of Tequendama. The city has a university, and several large churches and handsome convents. Cartagena is the Republic's principal port; those of Santa Marta, Popayan, Paste, Aspinwall and Panama are for the present of minor importance.

The bay of Panama is very beautiful; the little islands scattered over it resemble baskets of verdure thrown upon the water. The city itself occupies a most picturesque position; but within it is sombre and mournful, and presents the appearance of a city in decadence. Notwithstanding, the hour of its prosperity has struck, and every American who comes to seek shelter there brings, in his labor, a sure pledge of its grandeur to come.

I had the honor of seeing several times Monseigneur the Bishop of Panama. This worthy prelate showed me the greatest kindness, and expressed his ardent desire to have some Jesuits in his diocese. But this is enough for to-day. Permit me to take breath before issuing with you upon the floods of a new sea.

We parted at Panama; I would like to recall you thither, in order to present to you my traveling companions, now about to embark. They are no less than 1,300 in number, and they are busy stowing themselves away the best they can in the interior and on the deck of the great steamship which is already bearing us away.

On the 2d of October we left the bay of Panama. We coasted along almost the entire shore line of Costa Rica and Nicaragua. By the sixth day we had come 1,500 miles, and we reached Acapulco, where we made a stop to take on provisions and coal. This is the only port upon the Pacific which Mexico has retained. It has a very beautiful bay, which has the advantage of being sheltered from gales, being surrounded by high hills and mountains. Yonder you can see an ancient fort; all that one can say for it is that it is still standing. Enter the city; you will find but a single church, and a very poor one at that. Look at the houses, how wretched they are and what an indolent and lazy air the inhabitants have. Poor people! I imagine that they think much less of acquiring fortunes than of struggling against misery. They live chiefly on fish, do a little business in fruit and vegetables and a little pearl-fishing also. Although few in number, this population presents a mixture of almost all races; you would find descendants of the Spanish, Indians, negroes and mulattoes of all degrees; you would distinguish also half-breeds and *zambos*.

Let me say a few words of a sufficiently curious spectacle which the *zambos* gave for our benefit as the boat came up. They are all good swimmers, and can stay in the water for hours at a time without showing the slightest weariness. It is most remarkable. Hardly had they espied our vessel, when they rushed forth to meet us. Soon they surrounded us, begging with voice and gesture for our pretty five and ten-cent pieces. Purse-strings are untied, the little coins are dropped into the sea, our excellent divers following in their wake. A few moments later they reappear upon the surface with the precious prize in their hands, which they display with pride to the spectators and then deposit in a safe place — their mouth. The close of the exhibition was sudden and exciting; a shark appeared on a sudden in the midst of the swimmers, and gave the signal for retreat. It was a general panic flight. The voracious visitor was a good fellow, however, and permitted them all to regain their boats without appropriating any of their heads, arms or legs.

On the second day after, October 10th, we made a short stop at Manzanilla, to leave and take on the mails. A few hours previously we had made out in the distance the volcanic mountain named Popocatapetl, or la Puebla; it is the loftiest peak of the Sierra Madre, and one of the highest on the globe; its height is 5,400 metres [19,623 feet].

On the 11th we passed within sight of Cape San Lucas, the southernmost point of Old California. The Santa Margarita, Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands, and others, presented themselves in turn to our view, as well as a great number of whales and other cetaceans, which abound in those seas. On the 15th we perceived Point Concepcion, 250 miles distant from San Francisco; we saluted from afar Santa Barbara, San Luis and Monterey, and on the 16th we came to San Francisco. I was glad to find myself in a house of the Society and in the company of several of my brethren in Jesus Christ, who overwhelmed me with kindness and care, with the most cordial charity. One especially appreciates the *Quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum,* after having been shut up in a ship among 1,300 individuals of all nations, on earth, all with their morals infected with the yellow (or golden) fever, and who think, speak and dream of nothing but of mines of gold and the earthly happiness which their wealth is to procure them hereafter — and often this "hereafter" never arrives.

An examination of the map will show you how favored California is by nature. It is surprising how this country could be so long neglected, and as it were forgotten, despite its immense advantages. To-day it has a start, and commerce and all human industries are centering there and developing with a rapidity that bewilders the boldest and most adventurous spirits. The soil is generally fertile and adapted to all the exigencies of life; the products exceed the demand already, and go to enrich distant markets. I would never stop if I tried to tell you in detail of the soft climate of this lovely land, the regularity of its seasons, its fine mountains, its rich valleys, its immense prairies, where horses and a multitude of other domestic animals multiply to infinity, its incomparable mines, etc., etc. Consider that for a century to come the bosom of California will remain open to thousands of miners, greedy for gold and silver.

A dozen years ago San Francisco was nothing but a very little seaport, with only a handful of inhabitants. To-day it is the marvel, and the port *par excellence,* of the whole Pacific Ocean. A population of at least 60,000 souls has sprung up, gathered from all the corners of the earth. There are 4,000 Chinese, preserving faithfully the manners and customs of their fatherland, including the long queue; almost all of them live in a separate quarter, and they are quiet and industrious, though charged with great immorality. I need not say that in this modern Babel one's ears are continually rent by strange sounds and cries belonging to all the languages and jargons of earth; while one's eyes become weary of this living panorama, in which appear in turn all the diverse shapes and the various colors of the poor human species.

But what consoles and reconciles one with all this uproar and these continual changes in sight, is the sweet thought that our holy religion has its share in the astonishing activity of this future great people. Judge of its progress: besides a fair cathedral, just recently built by its venerable titular, who is an archbishop, there are five churches, four convents, a college directed by our Fathers and several schools for boys and girls. Pray often that God will bless these first consoling successes.

The markets were covered with the most beautiful fruit; grapes, melons, pears, etc., etc. In no place have I seen any surpassing them in beauty, size and flavor. Grapes are so plentiful that two steamboats were employed daily in transporting them from Los Angeles to San Francisco.

In the matter of size California stands second among the American States. It is three times as large as Virginia and has a coastline 800 miles in length. The bay of San Francisco is one of the most beautiful in the universe; it contains a great number of excellent harbors. Its position, opposite the Sandwich Islands, the Celestial Empire, Japan and the Philippine Islands; its almost daily connection with the long stretch of South American coast, with the Eastern States, and even with the greater portion of the great European ports; everything, in short, both without and within, seems to combine to make this land one of the most important commercially and one of the most thickly populated in the world. There is no doubt that its commercial metropolis will soon be the New York of the West.

The surface of California is especially mountainous. Two long mountain ranges run almost parallel along the coast. The principal rivers are the Colorado, Sacramento and San Joaquin. The gold mines lie principally on the base of the Sierra Nevada, for a length of about 500 miles, along the tributaries of the large rivers.

One word further, before I close, concerning a natural wonder which probably has not its like in all the universe. The cedars of Lebanon are celebrated for more reasons than one. What is especially admired is their age; 4,000 years! The most ancient are as much as eleven metres in circumference, and their tops still stand high in air, though so often smitten by the thunderbolt and battered by the tempest. But what are these majesties in ruins, in the presence of the Washingtonia of California? You may judge. In Calaveras county there is a forest of enormous trees, pines, cedars, etc. There are sugar-pines with a diameter of not six, but eight feet, and a height of 200 feet and more. Still these are only a species of big dwarfs beside ninety-six giant trees (*Sequoia gigantea*) which stand within a mile of one another. One of them, the Father of the Forest, has been uprooted by the winds, and at present the ground is encumbered with its enormous fragments. Grasp, if you are able, its proportions; 112 feet in circumference and more than 450 in length. Another of them has been felled. To make use of the stump, it has been leveled off and made the foundation of a printing shop. The whole building rests on this stump, which serves for a floor at the same time; they have even taken pains to preserve a portion of the trunk at the side, which has been worked into a fine staircase of twenty-six steps. Each of these colossi of the vegetable kingdom has its name. The most noteworthy are the Two Guards, the Three Graces, the Twins, Hercules, the Hermit, the Beauty of the Forests, etc. In Belgium one will hardly believe in all these prodigies of vegetation. I have not been able to see them with my eyes, but I have the particulars I have given you from respectable eye-witnesses. This is enough about big trees. After all, they do not deserve, among so many other *mirabilia Dei*, more than a little exclamation point —!

The distance covered from New York to San Francisco, by the Aspinwall and Panama route, is 6,850 miles. Some 800 miles more and we are at the mouth of the Columbia; there I will resume my narrative.

On the 20th of October, 1858, I left San Francisco for the mouth of the Columbia. We passed within sight of Cape Mendocino, the westernmost point of the United States, and skirted the coast of Oregon. On the 23d we passed over the dangerous bar of the Columbia, which I had crossed for the first time in 1844. A large and handsome light-house has been erected on Cape Disappointment, since the advent of civilization. The savages, formerly so numerous along the coast and the river, have almost entirely disappeared. Every approach of the whites thrusts them back, by force or otherwise; they go upon reservations, in a strange land, far removed from their hunting and fishing grounds, and where drink, misery and diseases of every sort mow them down by hundreds.

Since the whites have taken possession of the Indian lands, great changes have taken place throughout the country. The Willamette valley has changed its aspect entirely. They now have there a great number of towns and villages, rich and beautiful farms, with vast apple orchards. They raise apples of an extraordinary size and beauty. Barley, wheat and oats do very well here, and vegetables of every sort likewise.

I will mention in passing the towns and villages that are seen on both banks in going up the Columbia river; a great many others will rise before long, as new settlers come in. After passing the bar of the Columbia, behind Cape Disappointment, a large bay appears on the left, on the Washington side, the shores of which are covered with a thick forest of larch and pine. There you may behold two houses, rather far apart; they mark the location of Pacific City, the embryo of a great future city. For the moment, the sawmill is in repose, and though the "city" is new, the solitary houses in it already look quite old and sad.

I may remark here that, especially in the new territories, speculators in the line of starting towns and villages are very numerous. When they choose their sites well and succeed in attracting people thither, their fortune is made. But many of them simply lose their time and money. Let them adorn the places where their imaginations or private interests would see great cities arise, with great names, call them New London, Paris, Madrid, St. Petersburg or whatever you please — in most cases, nobody sets up his penates there, and though the sites be well chosen, the new capitals are soon forgotten.

Twelve miles above Pacific City (in the territory of Oregon) are the fort and little town of Astoria, or rather the two Astorias, the upper and the lower. They are only two villages as yet, rather picturesquely established on the slope of a steep hill, surrounded with thick forests of the Canada balsam. Either of them may contain twenty to thirty little houses of wood, painted white and of fairly good appearance.

After the Astorias, you go on up the river for twenty-four miles without seeing anything like a town or village. It is a succession of fine high hills, covered with dense forests, the picturesque aspect of which enchants the newcomers; but it will be many years before anything can be done here save to cut timber. Then you come to Cathlamet, a village in Washington composed of six houses. Ten miles farther, is the village of Oak Point, with a few houses and a sawmill; here we come to the first oak on the Columbia. After another twelve miles, and fifty-eight miles from the ocean, appears Rainier, a village of twelve houses in the Oregon Territory. Another, St. Helen's, on the same side and eighteen miles farther up, contains a score of buildings. As we ascend the Columbia, the white summits of Mounts St. Helen's, Rainier, Jefferson and Hood, covered with perpetual snow and rising to a great height, offer sublime spectacles which one never wearies of watching.

Twenty miles beyond St. Helen's, you come to Vancouver, consisting of some hundred houses, besides the fort recently built for the use of the troops. There is a little frame Catholic church, which has the title of cathedral; a bishop and his grand vicar, and two little schools for boys and girls. The last is directed by some very fervent and zealous sisters. Vancouver is considered the most flourishing of the towns on the Columbia.

Thirty-six miles above Vancouver, and at the distance of 132 miles from the sea, the river passes through the mountainous Cascade range. For a stretch of five miles it is strewn with great masses of rock, accumulated in a quite narrow place, which form those rapid and insurmountable currents called the Cascades. The view of the mountains on each side of the river is truly ravishing and grand. Their flanks are covered with trees and high brush, and especially now in the fall the different-colored foliage augments greatly the beauty and magnificence of these picturesque places. The numerous streamlets that are seen falling from rock to rock contribute greatly to set off the beauty of the region. The village called Cascade is destined, I doubt not, to become a very important centre.

After sixty miles of navigation above the Cascades, we reach the Dalles, another fall of the Columbia, which boats cannot pass. The aspect of the country becomes less interesting as we ascend the river. The lofty hills on both sides are almost wholly bare of vegetation or verdure. The new city that has just been started here has taken the name of the place — Dalles City. It has upward of 100 houses, some of which are of stone. A fine future is predicted for it by reason of its position. A number of large farms are grouped around this new colony and on the same side of the river. I visited the Catholic soldiers of the fort of Dalles City.

A series of colonies of white settlers will soon be established along the rivers Des Chutes, John Day and Umatilla, and over the 175 miles between the Dalles and Walla Walla. Umatilla has fine forests. This country is especially adapted to the raising of innumerable domestic animals; it is everywhere covered with an abundant and nourishing grass. At the mouth of the Des Chutes there is, as at Walla Walla, a new town started. The Walla Walla plain has already a great number of habitations, in the neighborhood of the fort; the gold mines attract many thither. Farther down, on the Cowlitz river, below the Willamette, is Monticello, the beginning of a town. On Puget Sound are the cities of Olympia, Steilacoom, Fort Townsend, Seattle and Tumwater. There is much rivalry among them as to which will become the notable place.

The news of the cessation of hostilities against the United States and the submission of the Indians had been received at Fort Vancouver. The savages, however, still retained their prejudices and an uneasiness and alarm which had to be dissipated, and there were false reports to be rectified. Otherwise the war might soon break out afresh. Under the orders of the commanding general I left Fort Vancouver on the 29th of October to go among the mountain tribes, some 800 miles distant.

On the 2d of November I set out from the fort at the Dalles, in an ambulance, for Walla Walla. This journey took about eight days. The plains that we crossed are for the most part undulating and covered with tufted grass. All this country is to-day stripped of animals and game; we did not see anything of the sort. Where we encamped on the Des Chutes, John Day and Umatilla rivers, we found wood for our camp-fire. This country has been under military occupation for some years, to keep the peace between the settlers and the Indians. Fort Vancouver is headquarters; then there are the fort at the Dalles and Fort Steilacoom in the interior; Fort Walla Walla in the valley of the same name and little Fort Taylor, on the right bank of Snake river.

I visited the Catholic soldiers at Fort Walla Walla. At this post I had the great consolation of meeting the Reverend Father Congiato, returning from his visit to the missions, and of getting reassuring news from him concerning the disposition of the savages. I also met here several Cœur d'Alène and Spokan families. They were prisoners, or rather hostages, from the war their nations had so recklessly engaged in after the deplorable attack upon Colonel Steptoe. These people were greatly surprised at my arrival, after an absence of eleven years; they appeared delighted, in view of the unhappy situation in which they found themselves. They were to be my traveling companions. I learned with pleasure that all of them, and especially the Cœur d'Alènes, had managed during their captivity to gain the good will of the officers and soldiers of the fort, by exemplary and Christian-like conduct. At the fort as at their own homes, alone or surrounded by strangers, evening and morning they were seen devoutly reciting their prayers and heard singing their pious canticles. One of the most respectable captains said that he should never forget the deep impression which the piety of these poor savages had made upon him. The officers and soldiers were fond of enjoying this edifying spectacle. The commandant of the fort felt very kindly toward them. He accepted with much benevolence the proposition I made him, to take them with me into their own country, if it were only to pass the winter. He even issued orders to provide them abundantly with provisions for the journey. This condescension on his part will never be forgotten by the Indians, nor by the two tribes for whose salvation they had generously offered themselves as hostages. This benefactor's name will remain in benediction among the nations of this region; for, whatever their detractors may say, Indians know how to appreciate a kind act and to be grateful for a favor received.

I left Walla Walla on the 13th of October, with my companions, glad and free, the Cœur d'Alènes and Spokans. They acted as my guides. Throughout the journey, they showed me unceasing signs of gratitude. Their exactiture in their religious duties was to me a source of consolation and happiness.

We encamped the first night on Little Dry Fork, where we found water and brush enough for our cooking and abundant forage for our pack animals. Here we had an annoying accident, caused by a good half-breed whom the commandant had given me to take care of my horses and serve as my interpreter. I cannot say what he was doing with his powder horn, but anyway it exploded in his hands, severely burning his fingers, arms and face. We sent word of the sad occurrence to the fort, and in a short time a surgeon and two employees came to the rescue of the wounded man and took him back to the hospital in a kind of carriage.

The distance from Walla Walla to the Traverse, a place called thus because Snake river is traversed there, is about fifty miles. There are rather uneven plains, covered with rich pasturage, and in some places mountains entirely bare of timber. We reached the Traverse on October 15th, by the valley of a little well-wooded river, called the Two Canyons. At the mouth of this stream the small fort bearing the name Taylor has been built. Here there was a numerous camp of Palooses. The chiefs received us with kindness, and eagerly aided us in getting across the main river with our horses and baggage. We went on and camped in the Paloos valley, at the foot of the Bad Rock, four miles above the mouth of that river. A large number of Palooses came and spent the evening with us; they seemed hungry for news, in the critical situation in which they were with regard to the whites. They were charged with having taken an active part in the attack on Colonel

Steptoe, and having been among the principal instigators of the warfare on the whites. I found them very attentive to my advice and to the religious instruction that I gave them; several even gave evidences of a desire of having a Catholic mission among them.

The Bad Rock is a very remarkable place. Basaltic rocks rise to great heights in various shapes, sometimes like lofty walls with narrow passages, sometimes like dentelated towers or bastions, or old ruined fortresses. From Snake River to the great Cœur d'Alène Lake the country consists of continuous rolling plains, though generally more level than the plains of Walla Walla and the Nez Percés. Wood is scarce; water fails in autumn, and in winter snow lies deep. These are serious impediments to the formation of white colonies. Still, there is grazing for millions of domestic animals in these immense fat pastures; there are also nourishing roots and various fruits, which the Indians gather to help out their stock of provisions. Game is rather scarce in the high plains. From time to time a grouse or prairie chicken would rise at our passage and fall victim to a hunter's shot.

The weather continued beautiful and agreeable throughout the journey. Every day we performed the evening and morning prayers in common, accompanied with singing. In these long evenings, seated around the camp-fire, the Indians loved to relate to me, with really touching simplicity, the principal things that had happened since I left them, such as the death of their chiefs, etc. On my side, I did not lack interesting things to tell them.

After three long days' journeys in the plains, and crossing a high mountain covered with a dense forest of cedars and pines, we arrived, on the evening of the 18th, at the great Cœur d'Alène lake. Here we found several Cœur d'Alène families, who received me with the liveliest cordiality. The unexpected return of the prisoners hightened the universal joy still further. The next day, I celebrated the holy sacrifice of the mass, as a thanksgiving service for all the favors received from heaven during the voyage. When one has been traveling for some time through monotonous and treeless countries, having to camp every night by some fringe of brush insufficient to maintain a good fire, or on the banks of a little river, brook or spring; and then when one comes to a noble forest, where gigantic trees rise on the border of a vast lake, whose water is clear as crystal, the emotions aroused in one by the contrast are such as cannot be described.

CHAPTER IV.

PEACE WITH THE OREGON INDIANS.

Causes of war — Hostility of Kamiakin — Lies circulated — Approach of troops — The first blow — The Cœur d'Alène country — De Smet met by Father Gazzoli — Reaches Sacred Heart Mission and remains until spring — Indians fond of work — Honesty of Kootenais — Across deep snow to Bitter Root valley — Flatheads still keep the faith — Escorts chiefs to Fort Vancouver for interview with officials.

I HAVE spoken of the prisoners of war made among the Cœur d'Alènes by the United States troops. The following are the causes of the war:

For some years past, the Indians had given signs of uneasiness relative to the future invasion of their lands by the whites. The treaties negotiated by Governor Stevens, and the wars that had followed, had provoked these fears. They demanded urgently of the Governor that the troops should respect the portion of country included between the Columbia, Snake river and the Rocky Mountains; they proposed to remain neutral, and desired to have this territory respected by both parties. They seemed disposed to renounce invasion; but this did not suit the chiefs Kamiakin, Telgawêê and consorts, who, at the time of the war between the Yakimas and Cayuses, had tried every means to draw the Cœur d'Alènes into the trouble on their side. The Catholic missionaries of the country used their influence to restrain them, and though they were sometimes accused of siding with the Americans against the Indians, they succeeded in holding their people in. When the Yakimas, counseled by Father Pandosy, had made their peace, in spite of Kamiakin, and the military post of Simcoe had been established, Kamiakin took refuge among his own men, the Palooses. Tinêwê, Telgawêê and a number of other Cayuse, Yakima and Walla Walla refugees were there also.

Kamiakin could not keep quiet. By means of gifts he had won over the richest of the Cœur d'Alènes. He came and spent the winter of 1857–58 with him, and sought without ceasing to communicate to him his own sentiments of distrust toward the whites, even the priests. "They are white like the Americans," he told him; "they all have one heart." Because the Cœur d'Alènes refused to come out, they were called "women — little dogs who only know enough to bark when danger is at hand." Fresh rumors were circulated every day; but especially after murders had been committed by the Palooses, the excitement grew more and more. Several Indians told Father Joset "that they were tired of Kamiakin's doings." A white man had told them, "Poor savages! It is all up with you now. The troops are coming this year to take possession of your lands." Another, "I have seen them already, 500 of them, camped on Snake river." A third white man had assured them that "500 soldiers would come first to Colville; that they would soon be followed by 500 more, and so on, until they were strong enough, when they would lay aside the mask and declare themselves masters of the country." Another day "the troops had formed three columns and crossed Snake river at three places, to take possession of the whole country at once." Father Joset could not assure himself whether white men had really said these things; but he has very little doubt that false reports were often spread among the Indians to excite them to war. A good many Americans looked on war as a good thing for the country, and a means to make money plentiful.

Despite all Kamiakin's efforts, there was no apparent likelihood that the Cœur d'Alènes would let themselves be drawn in; this was far from the case: three weeks before the Steptoe fight, the chief Vincent told Father Joset that "it may very well happen that we shall have to fight the Palooses, who are very sore against us *because we will not declare against the Americans*."

The sudden approach and inexplicable march of Colonel Steptoe came in here to give the lie to all the arguments of the most sensible men, and those best disposed toward the whites. "I had always repeated to our Indians," says Father Joset, "'have no fear. If the troops cross the river, it can only be against the Palooses or the whisky sellers at Colville.'"

But the troops did not take the road for Colville, nor that for the Paloos country. A portion of the Cœur d'Alènes were digging roots in the Nez Percé country. Learning that the soldiers were marching toward them, they at once retired and went to join their own people in the country of the Spokans. At once the Federals changed their line of march and came to the Indians' new camp. The colonel sent word that he was going to Colville. Just suppose for an instant that, instead of having to do with poor ignorant savages, it had been a question of white people; would they have believed the colonel's statement? Would they not have said, "How can we believe that you are going to Colville, when you are not traveling that way at all? If you were going to Colville, you would not have come here to where we are camped, very far from the road to Colville." That is what white men would most certainly have said.

As the soldiers approached, the words of Tim-o-tsen, the guide of the troops, were continually brought to the Cœur d'Alènes. This is what he said:

"Cœur d'Alènes, soon we shall divide your spoil." And moreover, on the 16th of May, when Father Joset reached the Indian camp, they came and told him "that a slave of the soldiers (an Indian who accompanied them) had arrived in Kamiakin's camp, and reported these words of the chief of the soldiers: "Cœur d'Alènes, no matter what you do, your wives, your children and your lands are ours." Let any thinking man say: if instead of Cœur d'Alènes, it had been a white people, would the magistrates, with no other resources than words, have been able to control the uprising? And also, even yet, the Cœur d'Alènes will excuse themselves to you, saying, "Did we go to hunt for the Federal soldiers? Was it not their bands who came upon us, when we had not done a thing?"

When Father Joset was at Walla Walla, early in November, 1858, he had been told that the colonel was marching against Telgawêê, who had been stealing Government horses and killing whites who were on their way to Colville. The Spokan and Cœur d'Alène chiefs had expressed their indignation with the Palooses for this latter deed. "I do not know whether it is true," says Father Joset, "Colonel Steptoe never said anything of the sort to me; but if it was so, this would explain the whole puzzle." Telgawêê was camped in the country of the Nez Percés, in the neighborhood of the Cœur d'Alènes. When these last withdrew at the approach of our soldiers, he also went away, to join the other Palooses, who were likewise in the Spokan country, in the neighborhood of the Spokan and Cœur d'Alène camps. Father Joset had already heard the latter accuse this same Telgawêê of having deceived them, by falsely reporting the words of Tim-o-tsen. The latter, it was claimed, said: "Telgawêê, soon we will go and divide the spoils;" which Telgawêê translated, "Cœur d'Alènes, soon we will go and divide your spoils." It was said to have been Kamiakin who, later, accused Telgawêê of this perfidy. However this may be, the sight of the soldiers in the vicinity of their camp had irritated the young Cœur d'Alènes. It was only with difficulty that the chief, Vincent, succeeded in restraining them. Despite the colonel's protestations that he had nothing against them, that he was going to Colville, his coming near their camp was an enigma, and his presence was enough to support the irritation. His precipitate retreat, without having even asked for the chiefs to take farewell of them, had the look of a flight and was of a nature to encourage his enemies, rather than to appease them. But an incident calmed the passions of yesterday, when the chiefs were not there to suppress the riotous movement. This is the incident:

Father Joset had joined the colonel, in order to give him all the information that he had been able to gather, and with his consent he had brought the chief, Vincent, to him. The colonel told him "that he had not had the slightest intention of molesting the Cœur d'Alènes and Spokans; that he had always considered them as very well disposed; that having learned that there was trouble between the whites and the Indians at Colville, he had set out to go and talk to them and try to bring them to agreement; that he had thought to find as he passed a good occasion to see the chiefs, with whom he desired to confer; that he had been very much astonished, the day before, to see the Cœur d'Alènes and Spokans come against him with hostile demonstrations; that he had expected that it would come to blows, and that he was glad to return without bloodshed."

He recognized Vincent and gave him credit for the efforts he had made on the previous day to prevent the conflict. In fact, it was Vincent who, with Galgalt, chief of the Spokans, had in spite of all the efforts of Telgawêê managed to avert the trouble. Vincent had received a blow from a whip, from one of the Nez Percés who accompanied the expedition, who had said to him: "Boaster! why don't you fight?" Vincent turned, and, smiling, said to him, "Hereafter you will be ashamed of having struck your relative." This same Nez Percé seems to have told the officers afterward that he had only struck the chief's horse. Vincent persisted in his statement, adding, "It would be rather strange that my horse, which is very spirited, should not have made some movement if he had been struck." Nothing came of the affair, because Vincent and all the other chiefs, as well Cœur d'Alènes as Spokans, wanted only peace.

While Vincent was answering the colonel, his uncle came for him, saying that the Palooses were about to open fire. Father Joset at once notified the colonel, and went away with Vincent to report to the Cœur d'Alènes what they had heard from the officer's own mouth, as to his friendly disposition toward them.

A large number of Cœur d'Alènes gathered around us. As soon as the peaceful intentions of the colonel were announced to them, you could see the faces clear up. The chief, John Peter, then said, "We have nothing more to do here; we will go back, every man to his own country." Victor, one of the braves of the nation, a quasi-chief, spoke in the same sense as John Peter. Then Melkapsi slapped the chief and struck Victor. They would have fought, but Father Joset threw himself between them and drew Melkapsi aside. In an instant they were calm again, and thinking that everything was settled, the Father went off toward the camp with several chiefs, and announced that all was quiet. But scarcely had he been half an hour in his tent, when some one came in and told him that they were fighting. Father Joset did his utmost to get a horse; but only old men, women and children were left in the camp. Toward three or four o'clock, they brought him a work-horse. To reach the battle-field, he had more than twenty miles to go. He started, though with no prospect of getting there before dark. On the way he met a neophyte, who told him, "Father, you are fatiguing yourself in vain. The Indians are mad; they won't listen to anybody." Then Father Joset learned for the first time what had happened. Some kinsmen and friends of Victor and Melkapsi, irritated by the latter's insolence, had revenged themselves, in the Indian fashion, by doing something foolish. They went and fired on the troops. It was only a handful of hot-heads, and the troops did not return the fire until one of their number was struck. Then, most unhappily, Jacques, the best of the Indians, beloved by all, and Zachary, brother-in-law of the head chief, were killed, and Victor mortally wounded. Only then did the engagement become serious; and if the colonel had not withdrawn secretly, leaving, like a prudent leader, a bait for the Indians' cupidity, it is more than probable that very few would have escaped. The forces were too much out of proportion with the gravity of the circumstances.

These Indians, who had never recognized the Government, and had no idea of its power, had never received either benefit nor injury from it; but they had seen the tribes of lower Oregon oppressed, the Cayuses, Yakimas and others led by threats into treaties which had been followed by war. They were not hostile to the Government, but they were keeping a sharp lookout. They prided themselves on never having misused the whites. Jealous of their tribe's independence, they asked nothing of them, but seemed by their attitude to say "Let us alone." Colonel Steptoe's march appeared to them hostile. In their situation, it was bound so to appear. This is how the 17th of May came about. The encounter with Colonel Wright was a different thing.

Vincent, and all the other Indians as well that Father Joset had occasion to see, evinced great regret over what had happened, and sought to restore to the Government the animals in their possession. How came they then to take up arms again? "This," says Father Joset, "was the consequence of a custom which was unknown to me, and of which Vincent did not think when he made that promise. After a battle in which blood has been shed, the chiefs cannot make peace without the consent of the families which have lost a member. So, when the terms of Vincent's promise were known, a great opposition arose; but when they learned the terms of the propositions offered by General Clarke, one article of which stipulated that the authors of the battle with Colonel Steptoe should be given up, without even their lives being promised them, as Colonel Wright afterward did, then the relations of those who had been killed pronounced obstinately against the peace.

"Then Vincent, braving the hatred and vengeance of his nation, forsook them and came to the missionaries, who had declared that the continuation of hostilities would compel them to retire. Forty-five men rallied to Vincent's support.

As to the others, it is positively averred that the great majority desired peace; but they dared not go counter to an ancient usage and break with their brethren and friends. To the last moment, they strove to bring to these peaceful views two or three kinsmen of the victims of the battle of May 17th; but in vain. They persisted to the end, and dragged in the others despite their repugnance. They took no part in the first engagement with Colonel Wright; they did follow the Kalispels to the second battle, if battle there was; for no lives were lost in it. From the first, the colonel knew how to disable them, and it was practically no fight, but a complete rout.

"Before this, the Indians smiled with pity when any one suggested that they could not make head against the whites; but the brave Colonel Wright so well persuaded them that, by their own admission, they cannot even think of war any more. They are like men tied hand and foot, who cannot move.

"The effect produced by Colonel Wright's expedition is such that one must be upon the spot to gain any idea of it. A general war was on the eve of breaking out. The volunteer expeditions had exasperated the Indians, without inspiring them with any dread; but by the able manner in which the colonel made the most of his resources, he completely rid the savages of any desire to measure themselves with the American troops. Furthermore, he has terrified the bad Indians by his severity, as much as he has won the hearts of the good ones by his clemency. In short, he has deserved well of the Republic, above all that can be said for him. And finally, the fine discipline that he enforced wherever he passed has been an eloquent reply to the slanders by which it had been sought to render the military odious to these poor people, insomuch that the chief, Vincent, was able to say to the officers, and it is the expression of the feeling of the whole nation: 'Before, we knew you only by hearsay, and we hated you; now that we have seen you, we love you.'

"All that I have said is a proof that it would not be difficult to overcome this ancient antipathy of the Indians against the Americans, and to avoid the difficulties that are constantly springing up afresh, if only a good choice be made of the men who are sent to them to transact the business."

This is a summary sketch of the hostilities that broke out between the tribe of the Cœur d'Alènes and the United States. I will proceed with my journey among them in my next letter.

I[1] had reached the great Cœur d'Alène lake on the 18th of October, 1858. I will give you an idea of the country occupied by this tribe and of the missionary field that our Fathers are tending.

The Cœur d'Alène country is truly picturesque; it is one of the most beautiful in Washington Territory. Nature seems singularly to have favored it, and on all my various visits I have always greatly admired it. From north to south and from east to west, the extent of country which the Cœur d'Alènes occupy may be a hundred miles. The surface is mountainous throughout. Father Joset, who has been fifteen years a missionary in this country, compares it to Jura, one of the most beautiful cantons of his native Switzerland. It has, he says, the same climate, the same display of large and small valleys, hills and mountains covered with fine forests. Here, in these primeval forests, trees of different sorts are mingled. There are ten distinct varieties in the nature of pines, firs, spruce, larch, etc.; the cedar occurs in all its grandeur; ivy, poplar and aspen abound, especially in the valleys.

The Cœur d'Alène lake, with its twenty-five bays and promontories, may have a length of close to thirty miles by a width of five; the range of mountainous hills that inclose it are of extremely varied aspect. It receives its waters principally from two fine rivers, named Saint Joseph and Cœur d'Alène, which have a tranquil and limpid flow, barely perceptible in the fall. Each of them is about 100 yards wide, and each valley one to three miles. Here and there lovely little lakes may be admired, three to six miles in circumference, at the feet of high mountains which set off their full beauty. Two of the valleys inclose considerable portions of fertile lands and rich pasturages. The upper valleys are full of camas, a very nutritious root, which requires no cultivation. The mountains which border the valleys are mainly of conical form, often resembling sugar-loaves. Some have their summits covered with snow throughout a good part of the year. The most picturesque sites abound. The grazing grounds near the lakes, as well as those of the valleys and the verdant sides of the hills and mountains, would be ample for the maintenance of thousands of cattle, sheep and horses. They would have to be carried over through the severe winter, however, for during four months of the year the country presents merely the aspect of a desert covered with deep snow, and cannot be crossed save on snowshoes.

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[1] From the French of the third Belgian edition, vol. IV.

Diligent Indians find a good living on their lands in the great variety of roots and fruits that they can gather. At the same time the lakes, rivers and smaller streams, at almost all seasons of the year, but especially at the melting of the snows, swarm with various kinds of fish, principally the handsome salmon trout. The Cœur d'Alènes in general cultivate sundry small patches of yams, carrots, peas and beans, wheat and barley. They catch fish, and have no lack of wild animals.

I had forty miles yet to make to reach the Mission of the Sacred Heart. When we reached the great lake, on the 18th, the sky was covered with clouds and seemed to announce the approach of bad weather. It set in, in fact, with a heavy snowfall and a steady rain, which continued all night, to such an extent that part of my tent was under water. It became impossible for us to break camp the following day. Reverend Father Gazzoli, nephew of the cardinal of the same name who died in 1857, and superior of the missions, having learned of our approach, had come, in spite of the bad weather, to meet me, in an old rude *barquette,* which leaked in more than one place. The good Father gave me a great deal of news, some consoling and some sad, concerning the country and the Indians. As the day of invasion by the whites approaches, the mind of the poor Indian becomes uneasy, gloomy and apprehensive. The idea of having presently to leave the place where repose the ashes of his fathers and of all those he has loved, and his hunting and fishing grounds, throws him into a state of entire hopelessness, which is the worse because it is irremediable and irresistible. The Indian sees nothing ahead of him but a dark and sombre future. That is the present state of all the tribes of these parts. It will not be easy to preach resignation to them. We must pray for them and hope in the Lord.

On the 20th we took to the boat, and after a ride of about ten miles over the beautiful waters of the lake, we entered the sweet and smiling valley, two to three miles wide, between two picturesque mountain ranges, where the Cœur d'Alène river flows with so gentle a current that the motion of its crystalline water is barely perceptible. Fifteen miles or so from its mouth, we camped at the foot of a high mountain, under the thick foliage of a great cedar which sheltered us against the inclemency of the season.

Some Indians had gone on ahead in their light canoes of the bark of the Canada balsam, of the thickness of ordinary pasteboard; they float with surprising lightness and swiftness. A good fire had been kindled, and when we arrived the coffee-pot and a great kettle of soup, made of flour and meat, were already boiling. It was late, and we had eaten nothing since breakfast. We therefore did honor to the dinner-supper, by the best of appetites.

Finally, on the 21st of November, in the afternoon, we reached the mission after a long ride, and I had the happiness of embracing my dear brethren in Jesus Christ; among them, the Reverend Father Aloïs Vercruysse and Brother Francis Huybrechts, both Belgians, who have been laboring in our missions for fifteen years with indefatigable and truly apostolic zeal.

The bad season had commenced, and it was not long before the snow had filled all the passes of the mountains, and heavy ice began to float on the rivers and lakes. I was therefore compelled to abandon, for the time being, my project of going to the mission of the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles, who are located six days' journey to the northeast, in one of the loftiest valleys of the Rocky Mountains.

At the beginning of winter, the snow piles up on the plateaus and in the mountain gorges to a great depth. They never become practicable, either for ordinary footwear or for snowshoes, until after a good thaw and rain, followed by a hard freeze; only then can the intrepid traveler venture upon a passage. Without this precaution, a man is risking his life. It is rare for a foolhardy or imprudent adventurer to escape the danger. I tried it in 1845. I then crossed, on snowshoes, the Saskatchewan Mountains at the sources of the Columbia, for a distance of about ninety miles, over snow five to twenty feet in depth. I shall never forget the good and brave savages who served me as guides at this time; but for them, certainly I should never have gotten out of the bad place I had so rashly engaged myself in. The danger that I ran on this occasion has made me more prudent. On my last journey, of which I am giving you the account, I therefore remained at the Sacred Heart Mission from November 21, 1858, to February 18, 1859. In this time we had forty-three days and forty-three nights of snow, more or less abundant. There were seven rainy days, twenty-one of cloudy weather, and sixteen of clear cold weather.

The Cœur d'Alène Mission possesses a handsome church, which would be a credit to any civilized country. It is ninety feet in length by thirty-five in width and thirty in height, with a portico supported by six massive columns. There are three altars, adorned with three magnificent pictures, brought from Rome. The beautiful statues of the holy Virgin and of Saint John at the foot of the cross, artistically sculptured by Father Ravalli, Cœur d'Alène missionary, attract especial attention.

The buildings consist of eight houses of logs squared on two faces, in which each Father and Brother has his chamber. There is a kitchen and a refectory. The barn and stables are very roomy, and are under one roof. Then there is a mill to grind the wheat, run by horse-power, and four closed sheds for provisions. The blacksmith, carpenter and baker have each man his shop. Around the church and not far from the Fathers in charge, are the cabins and lodges of the Indians, made of rounded wood, cedar-bark, skins and reeds, according to the various habits and tastes of the savages.

The redskins are fond of work. "The construction of their handsome church," said Father Gazzoli, "was the most agreeable pastime for them." All their leisure time they devoted to transporting the stones and timbers necessary in the construction. "To forbid a Cœur d'Alène to take part in the work, or to drive him away, is a very severe punishment for him." This is the testimony of the superior of the mission.

The fields and grazing grounds of the mission, with those of the Indians, are composed of two vast and beautiful vales, where the land is very fertile and yields prodigious crops, especially of grain. Father Joset told me that a single grain of wheat produces about 1,000 grains the first year. Last summer every acre produced 80 to 120 bushels of wheat.

If the Indians do not devote themselves more to agriculture, it is the fault of unfavorable circumstances surrounding them, particularly the lack of necessary implements for tilling and tools for building. The missionaries themselves are in great want of these things, and consequently cannot assist the Indians much.

On the day of the great feast of Christmas, I sang the midnight mass. All the Indians, men, women and children, intoned together the Vivat Jesus, the Gloria, the Credo and several canticles composed in their own tongue. They sang in really marvelous accord. I could not describe to you the consoling impressions that I felt at this happy moment, at this beautiful solemnity celebrated in the desert. It recalled to me those meetings or *agapés* of the first times of Christianity, when, as says Saint Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, all had "one heart and one soul." In the week preceding the feast, the Indians had carefully prepared themselves to make a good confession and hear the midnight mass. All, with few exceptions, approached the Lord's table to partake of the bread of angels. Such a scene is not forgotten, but remains among one's recollections as one of the happiest of his life.

There are among these poor Indians a great many really choice souls; faithful to the grace of God, humble, fervent and zealous in the accomplishment of their Christian duties, and endowed with that admirable simplicity which the gospel recalls to us in the text, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God." The riches and grandeurs of earth are absolutely unknown to them: they seem careful only for the "one thing needful," the search for the treasures of heaven, which alone can render them happy in eternity. Nothing could be more touching nor more edifying than the stories their missionaries tell us about them. These happy results abundantly repay the Lord's workmen, and support them amid the privations and miseries that they meet with in this little corner of the world, far from their brethren in Jesus Christ and separated from all that is dear to them in the world: their families and their native land.

The missionaries at present engaged in the Indian missions of the Rocky Mountains are these: Fathers Congiato, superior, a native of Sardinia; Gazzoli, a Roman; Joset, a Swiss; Vercruysse, a Belgian; Tadini, a Piedmontese; Hoeken, a Hollander; Menetrey, a Swiss; and Brothers Huybrechts, a Belgian; MacGill, an Irishman; Magrio, a Maltese; Specht, a German; Claessens, a Belgian, and De Kock, a Hollander.

St. Louis, Nov. 10, 1859.[2]

Reverend and Dear Father:

In accordance with my promise, I resume the little story of my long voyage. On my return to St. Louis, I tendered to the Minister of War my resignation of the post of chaplain. It was not accepted, because a new war had just broken out against the Government, among the tribes of the Rocky Mountains. I was notified by telegraph to proceed to New York, and to embark there with General Harney and his staff.

On the 20th of September, 1858, we left the port of New York for Aspinwall; it was the season of the equinox, so that we experienced some rough weather in the voyage, and a heavy wind among the Bahamas. We coasted for some time along the eastern shore of Cuba, in sight of the promontories of St. Domingo and Jamaica. On the 29th I crossed the Isthmus of Panama on a good railroad, forty-seven miles long. The next day I had the happiness to offer the holy sacrifice of the mass in the cathedral of Panama. The bishop very earnestly entreated me to use my influence with the Very Reverend Father General at Rome, to obtain for him a colony of Jesuits. His lordship especially expressed his earnest desire to intrust his ecclesiastical seminary to the care of the Society of Jesus. New Granada, as well as many other regions of Spanish South America, offers, doubtless, a vast field to the zeal of a large number of our Fathers.

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[2] From *New Indian Sketches*. See note to chap. II.

The distance from Panama to San Francisco is more than 3,000 miles. The steamer brought to in the superb bay of Acapulco to receive the mails, and to coal and water: this is a little port of Mexico. On the evening of the 16th of October, I arrived at San Francisco, happy to find myself in a house of the Society, and in the company of many of my brethren in Jesus Christ, who loaded me with kindness, and all the attention of the most cordial charity. The *"quam bonum et jucundum habitare fratres in unum"* is especially appreciated, when one leaves a California steamer in which one has been imprisoned, sometimes with fourteen or fifteen hundred individuals, all laboring under the gold fever, and who think and speak of nothing but mines of gold, and all the terrestrial delights which this gold is shortly to procure them. However, the "shortly" is long enough to allow of the destruction or disappearance of many an illusion. "All that glitters is not gold."

We left San Francisco on the 20th, and in four days made more than 1,000 miles to Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia river. The news of the cessation of hostilities and of the submission of the tribes had been received at Vancouver. The task remained of removing the Indian prejudices, soothing their inquietude and alarm, and correcting, or rather refuting, the false rumors which are generally spread after a war, and which otherwise might be the cause of its renewal.

Under the orders of the general commanding in chief, I left Fort Vancouver on the 29th of October to go among the tribes of the mountains, at a distance of about 800 miles. I visited the Catholic soldiers of Forts Dalle City and Walla Walla on my way. At the last-named fort, I had the consolation of meeting Reverend Father Congiato, on his return from his visit to the missions, and of receiving very cheering news from him as to the disposition of the Indians. At my request, the excellent commandant of the fort had the very great kindness to set at liberty all the prisoners and hostages, both Cœur d'Alènes and Spokans, and he intrusted to my charge to bring them on their way, and return them to their respective nations. These good Indians, particularly the Cœur d'Alènes, had given the greatest edification to the soldiers during their captivity: these men often surrounded them with admiration, to witness the performance of their pious exercises, morning and evening, and in listening to their prayers and hymns. During the whole journey, these good Indians testified the utmost gratitude to me, and their punctual performance of their religious duties was a source of great consolation and happiness to me.

On the 21st of November I arrived at the Mission of the Sacred Heart, among the Cœur d'Alènes. I was detained at the mission by the snow until the 18th of February, 1859. During this interval snow fell with more or less abundance on forty-three days and nights, on seven days it rained, we had twenty-one cloudy days, and sixteen days of clear and cold weather. I left the mission on the 18th of February with the Reverend Father Joset, who accompanied me until we met Father Hoeken, who had promised to meet us on Clark's river. The ice, snow, rain and winds impeded very much our course, in our frail canoes of bark, on the rivers and great lakes: we often ran considerable risk in crossing rapids and falls, of which Clark's river is full. I counted thirty-four of these in seventy miles. We met with several camps of Indians in winter quarters on every side. On the approach of the winter season, they are obliged to scatter in the forests and along the lakes and rivers, where they live by the chase and fishing. They received us everywhere with the greatest kindness, and, notwithstanding their extreme poverty, willingly shared with us their small rations and meagre provisions. They eagerly embraced the occasion to attend to their religious duties and other exercises of piety: attending at the instructions with great attention, and with much zeal and fervor, at mass, and at morning and evening prayers. On the 11th of March we arrived at the Mission of St. Ignatius, among the Pend d'Oreilles of the mountains.

The Kootenais, a neighboring tribe to the Pend d'Oreilles, having heard of my arrival, had traveled many days' journey through the snow to shake hands with me, to bid me welcome, and manifest their filial affection. In 1845 I had made some stay with them. I was the first priest who had announced to them the glad tidings of salvation, and I had baptized all their little children and a large number of adults. They came on this occasion, with a primitive simplicity, to assure me that they had remained faithful to "the prayer," that is, to religion, and all the good advice that they had received. All the Fathers spoke to me of these good Kootenais in the highest terms. Fraternal union, evangelic simplicity, innocence and peace, still reign among them in full vigor. Their honesty is so great and so well known, that the trader leaves his storehouse entirely, the door remaining unlocked often during his absence for weeks. The Indians go in and out and help themselves to what they need, and settle with the trader on his return. He assured me himself that in doing business with them in this style he never lost the value of a pin.

On the 18th of March I crossed deep snow a distance of seventy miles, to St. Mary's or Bitter Root valley, to revisit my first and ancient spiritual children of the mountains, the poor and abandoned Flatheads. They were greatly consoled on learning that Very Reverend Father-General had the intention of causing the mission to be undertaken again. The principal chiefs assured me that since the departure of the Fathers, they had continued to assemble morning and evening for prayers, to ring the angelus at the accustomed hour, and to rest on Sunday, to glorify the holy day of our Lord. I will not enter into long details here, as to the present dispositions of this little tribe, for fear of being too long. Doubtless, in the absence of the missionaries, the enemy of souls has committed some ravages among them, but by the grace of God the evil is not irreparable. Their daily practices of piety, and the conferences I held with them during several days, have given me the consoling conviction that the faith is still maintained among the Flatheads, and still brings forth fruits of salvation among them — their greatest chieftains, Michael, Adolphe, Ambrose, Moses, and others, are true and zealous Christians, and real piety in religion and true valor at war are united in them.

In my several visits to the stations in the Rocky Mountains, I was received by the Indians with every demonstration of sincere and filial joy. I think I may say that my presence among them has been of some advantage to them, both in a religious and secular point of view. I did my best to encourage them to persevere in piety, and to maintain the conditions of the treaty of peace with the Government. In these visits I had the happiness to baptize over 100 infants and a large number of adults.

On the 16th of April, in accordance with the orders of the commander-in-chief of the army, I left the Mission of St. Ignatius for Fort Vancouver. At my request, all the chiefs of the different mountain tribes accompanied me, to renew the treaty of peace with the general and with the Superintendent of Indian Affairs; I give their names, and the nations to which they belonged. Alexander Temglagketzin, or Man-without-a-horse, great chief of the Pend d'Oreilles: Victor Alamiken, or Happy-man (he deserves his name, for he is a saintly man), great chief of the Kalispels; Adolphus Kwilkweschape, or Red-feather, chief of the Flatheads; Francis Saxa, or Iroquois, another Flathead chief; Dennis Zenemtietze, or Thunders-robe, chief of the Skoyelpi or Chaudières; Andrew and Bonaventure, chiefs and braves among the Cœur d'Alènes, or Skizoumish; Kamiakin, great chief of the Yakimas; and Gerry, great chief of the Spokans. The last two are still pagans, though their children have been baptized.

A DELEGATION OF INDIAN CHIEFS IN OREGON.

We suffered much and ran many dangers on the route, on account of the high stage of the rivers and the heavy snow. For ten days we had to clear a way through thick forests, where thousands of trees, thrown down by storms, lay across one another, and were covered, four, six and eight feet with snow; several horses perished in this dangerous passage. My horse stumbled many a time, and procured me many a fall; but aside from some serious bruises and scratches, a hat battered to pieces, a torn pair of trousers and a *soutane* or black-gown in rags, I came out of it [the "Bad Forest"] safe and sound. I measured white cedars in the wood, which were as much as six or seven persons could clasp at the base, and of proportionate height. After a month's journey we arrived at Fort Vancouver.

On the 18th of May the interview took place with the general, the superintendent and the Indian chiefs. It produced most happy results on both sides. About three weeks' time was accorded to the chiefs to visit, at the cost of Government, the principal cities and towns of the State of Oregon and Washington Territory, with everything remarkable in the way of industrial establishments, steam engines, forges, manufactories and printing establishments — of all which the poor Indians can make nothing or very little. The visit which appeared the most to interest the chiefs, was that which they made to the prison at Portland and its wretched inmates, whom they found chained within its cells. They were particularly interested in the causes, motives, and duration of their imprisonment. Chief Alexander kept it in his mind. Immediately on his return to his camp at St. Ignatius Mission, he assembled his people, and related to them all the wonders of the whites, and especially the history of the prison. "We," said he, "have neither chains nor prisons; and for want of them, no doubt, a great number of us are wicked and have deaf ears. As chief, I am determined to do my duty: I shall take a whip to punish the wicked; let all those who have been guilty of any misdemeanor present themselves, I am ready." The known guilty parties were called upon by name, many presented themselves of their own accord, and all received a proportionate correction. The whole affair terminated in a general rejoicing and feast.

Before leaving the parts of civilization, all the chiefs received presents from the general and superintendent, and returned to their own country contented and happy and well determined to keep at peace with the whites.

CHAPTER V.[1]

RETURN TO ST. LOUIS.

Return to the mountains — Much water — Exciting passage of the woods — Eastward to Fort Benton in July — Blackfeet to have a mission — Horses worn out — Down as far as Omaha in a skiff — His expense account.

As for me, I had accomplished among the Indians the task which the Government had imposed upon me. I explained to the general my motives for desiring to return to St. Louis by way of the interior. He acceded to my desire with the greatest affability, and in an answer which he addressed to me on this matter, he bore most honorable testimony to my services.

About the 15th of June, I again left Vancouver with the chiefs, to return to the mountains. I passed the 7th, 8th and 9th of July at the Mission of the Sacred Heart, among the Cœur d'Alènes. Thence I continued my route for St. Ignatius with Father Congiato, and completed the trip in a week; not, however, without many privations, which deserve a short mention here.

Imagine thick, untrodden forests, strewn with thousands of trees thrown down by age and storms in every direction; where the path is scarcely visible, and is obstructed by barricades, which the horses are constantly compelled to leap, and which always endanger the riders. Two fine rivers, or rather great torrents,— the Cœur d'Alène and St. Francis Borgia,— traverse these forests in a most winding course; their beds are formed of enormous detached masses of rock, and large slippery stones, rounded by the action of the water. The first of these torrents is crossed thirty-nine times, and the second thirty-two times, by the only path; the water often comes to the horse's belly, and sometimes above the saddle. It is considered good luck to escape with only the legs wet.

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[1] Continuation of foregoing letter.

The two rivers are separated by a high mountain, or rather a chain of mountains, called the Bitter Root chain. The sides of these mountains, covered with thick cedar forests, and an immense variety of firs and pines, present great difficulties to the traveler, on account of the great number of trees which lie broken and fallen across the path, and completely cover the soil. To these obstacles must be added immense fields of snow, which have to be crossed, and which are at times from eight to twelve feet deep. After eight hours' painful climb, we arrived at a beautiful plain enameled with flowers, which formed the summit of Mount Calvary, where a cross was raised on my first passage, sixteen years ago. In this beautiful situation, after so long and rude a course, I desired to encamp; but Father Congiato, persuaded that in two hours more we should reach the foot of the mountain, induced us to continue the march. When we had made the six miles which we supposed we had before us, and twelve miles more, darkness overtook us in the midst of difficulties.

On the eastern side of the mountain we found other hills of snow to cross, other barricades of fallen trees to scramble over; sometimes we were on the edge of sheer precipices of rock, sometimes on a slope almost perpendicular. The least false step might precipitate us into the abyss. Without guide, without path, in the most profound darkness, separated one from the other, each calling for help without being able either to give or to obtain the least assistance, we fell again and again, we walked, feeling our way with our hands, or crawled on all fours, slipping or sliding down as best we could. At last a gleam of hope arose; we heard the hoarse murmur of water in the distance: it was the sound of the water-falls of the great stream which we were seeking. Each one then directed his course toward that point. We all had the good fortune to arrive at the stream at last, but one after another, between twelve and one o'clock in the night, after a march of sixteen hours, fatigued and exhausted, our dresses torn to rags, and covered with scratches and bruises; but without serious injuries. While eating our supper, each one amused his companions with the history of his mishaps. Good Father Congiato admitted that he had made a mistake in his calculation, and was the first to laugh heartily at his blunder. Our poor horses found nothing to eat all night in this miserable mountain gap.

I cannot omit here testifying my indebtedness to all the Fathers and Brothers of the Missions of the Sacred Heart and of St. Ignatius, for their truly fraternal charity toward me, and the efficacious aid which they rendered me toward fulfilling the special mission which had been intrusted to me.

As Father Congiato keeps the Very Reverend Father-General informed of the present state of the missions of the mountains, it is unnecessary for me to enter into all its details; I recommend, especially, these poor children of the desert to his paternal attention and charity, and to our immediate superiors in this country.

Divine Providence will not, I hope, abandon them. They have already a great number of intercessors in heaven, in the thousands of their children dead shortly after baptism, in the number of good Christian adults among them, who, having led good lives, have quitted this world in the most pious dispositions; they can especially count upon the protection of Louise, of the tribe of Cœur d'Alènes, and of Loyola, chief of the Kalispels, whose lives were an uninterrupted series of acts of heroic virtue, and who died almost in the odor of sanctity.

On the 22d of July I left the Mission of St. Ignatius, accompanied by Father Congiato with some guides and Indian hunters. The distance to Fort Benton is about 200 miles. The country for the first four days is picturesque, and presents no obstacle to traveling. It is a succession of forests easily traversed, of beautiful prairies, impetuous torrents, pretty rivulets; here and there are lakes, from three to six miles in circumference, whose waters are clear as crystal, well stored with fish of various kinds: nothing can be more charming than the prospect. We called one of the largest of these lakes, St. Mary.

On the 26th of July we crossed the mountain which separates the sources of the Clark River from those of the Missouri, at the 48th degree of north latitude and the 115th degree of longitude. The crossing does not take more than half an hour, and is very easy even for wagons and carts. At the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains the country is mountainous, and almost destitute of timber; we followed up a small tributary of the Dearborn for twelve miles to reach Sun River, and followed down its valley almost to its mouth. We visited the great falls of the Missouri on our way: the principal fall is ninety-three feet high. Father Hoeken and Brother Magri met us in this vicinity.

On the 29th we arrived at Fort Benton, a post of the St. Louis Fur Company, where we received the greatest attention from all its inmates. We feel particularly obliged to Mr. Dawson, the superintendent of the fort, for his continued kindness and charity to all our missionaries. May the Lord protect and reward him! The Blackfeet occupy an immense territory in this neighborhood; they reckon from 10,000 to 12,000 souls in the six tribes which compose this nation. They have been asking for Black-gowns (priests) for many years, and their desire appears universal. In my visit to them in 1846, they begged me to send a Father to instruct them.

Father Hoeken is now in these parts, and I have just read with the greatest pleasure, in the "Annals of the Propagation of the Faith," that the work of the conversion of the Blackfeet has been commenced, with the entire approbation of the Very Reverend Father-General.

On our arrival in the neighborhood, we found a large number of Indians encamped around and near the fort. It was the period for the annual distribution of presents. They manifested their joy at the presence of a missionary in their country, and hoped that "all would open to him their ears and heart." The chief of a large camp, in one of our visits, related to us a remarkable circumstance, which I think worthy of mention.

When Father Point was among the Blackfeet, he presented some crosses to many chiefs as marks of distinction, and explained to them their signification, exhorting them, when in danger, to invoke the Son of God, whose image they bore, and to place all their confidence in him. The chief who related these details was one of a band of thirty Indians who went to war against the Crows. The Crows having got upon their trail, gathered together in haste and in great multitudes to fight and destroy them. They soon came up with them in a position of the forest where they had made a barricade of fallen trees and branches, and surrounded them, shouting ferociously the dreaded war-cry. The Blackfeet, considering the superior numbers of the enemy who thus surprised them, were firmly persuaded that they should perish at their hands. One of them bore on his breast the sign of salvation. He remembered the words of the Black-gown (Father Point), and reminded his companions of them; all shouted, "It is our only chance of safety." They then invoked the Son of God and rushed from the barricade. The bearer of the cross, holding it up in his hand, led the way, followed by all the rest. The Crows discharged a shower of arrows and bullets at them, but no one was seriously injured. They all happily escaped. On concluding his statement, the chief added with energy and feeling: "Yes, the prayer (religion) of the Son of God is the only good and powerful one; we all desire to become worthy of it, and to adopt it."

My intention, when I left General Harney, was, with his consent, to go all the way to St. Louis on horseback, in the hope of meeting a large number of Indian tribes, especially the large and powerful tribe of Comanches. I was obliged to renounce this project, for my six horses were entirely worn out, and unfit for making so long a journey; they were all more or less saddle-galled, and, not being shod, their hoofs were worn in crossing the rocky bottoms of the rivers, and the rough, rocky mountain roads.

In this difficulty, I ordered a little skiff to be made at Fort Benton; worthy Mr. Dawson, superintendent of the Fur Company, had the very great kindness to procure me three oarsmen and a pilot. On the 5th of August I bade adieu to Fathers Congiato and Hoeken, and dear Brother Magri, and embarked on the Missouri, which is celebrated for dangers of navigation — snags and rapids being numerous in the upper river.

We descended the stream about 2,400 miles in our cockle-shell, making fifty, sixty, and sometimes, when the wind favored us, eighty miles a day. We took the first steamboat we met, at Omaha City. The steamer made about 700 miles in six days, and on the 23d of September, vigil of our Lady of Mercy, we entered the port of St. Louis.

During this long trip on the river we passed the nights in the open air, or under a little tent, often on sand-banks, to avoid the troublesome mosquitoes, or on the skirts of a plain, or in an untrodden thick forest. We often heard the howlings of the wolves; and the grunting of the grizzly bear, the king of animals in these parts, disturbed our sleep, but without alarming us. In the desert one perceives that God has implanted in the breast of the wild beasts the fear of man. In the desert, also, we are enabled in a particular way to admire and to thank that Divine Providence which watches with so much solicitude over his children. There is admirably verified the text of St. Matthew: "Consider the birds of the air, they sow not, but your Heavenly Father feeds them; are ye not of much more value than they." During the whole route, our wants were constantly supplied; yes, we lived in the midst of the greatest abundance. The rivers furnished us excellent fish, water-fowl, ducks, geese and swans; the forests and plains gave us fruits and roots. We never wanted for game: we found everywhere either immense herds of buffalo, or deer, antelope, mountain sheep or bighorn, pheasants, wild turkeys and partridges.

On the way, along the Missouri, I met thousands of Indians of different tribes: Crows, Assiniboins, Minnetarees, Mandans, Aricaras, Sioux, etc. I always stopped a day or two with them. I received the greatest marks of respect and affection from these hitherto untutored children of the plains and mountains, and they listened to my words with the utmost attention. For many years these poor tribes have desired to have missionaries and to be instructed.

My greatest, I may say almost my only consolation, is to have been the instrument, in the hand of Divine Providence, of the eternal salvation of a great number of little children; of about 900 I baptized, many were sickly, and seemed only to wait for this happiness, to fly to God, to praise him for all eternity.

To God alone be all the glory; and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, our most humble and most profound thanks for the protection and benefits received during this long journey. After having traveled, by land and river, over 8,314 miles, and 6,950 on sea, without any serious accident, I arrived safe and sound at St. Louis, among my dear brethren in Jesus Christ.[2]

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[2] P. J. De Smet in account with Government [while in its service as chaplain, 1859].

Pay for self as chaplain, etc., in the United States army in Oregon from the 1st of May, 1859, up to the 23d of September, 1859	$476 72

Expenses incurred during my voyage in Oregon and in Washington Territory with eight Indian chiefs, Flatheads, Cœur d'Alènes, Spokans, Kettlefall tribe, Kalispels, and Pend d'Oreilles, in the months of May and June, 1890:

Private traveling expenses from Champoeg to Portland....	$10 00
Expenses for Indians, clothing, saddles, etc................	35 50
To the hire and use of Indian horses from Dalles, Oregon, to Fort Benton, Nebraska Territory, in June and July, at two blankets or $10 a month	120 00
Private servant and assistant from Cœur d'Alène Lake (W. T.) till St. Louis, during the months of July, August, and up to the 23d of September, 1859	65 00
To Indian guides and canoemen from Cœur d'Alène Mission to St. Ignatius Mission, near Flathead Lake..............	72 00
To four Indian guides, assistants, and guard from St. Ignatius' Mission to Fort Benton, twenty days going and coming	60 00
To the hire of two Canadian boatmen from Fort Benton to St. Louis, at the rate of $45 each	90 00
To pilots and interpreters from 3d of August till 9th of September, from Fort Benton to Fort Randall	30 00
To tobacco, etc., during my intercourse with the Indians, east and west of the Mountains	20 00
To provisions for attendants in July, August and September to skiff, etc..	59 50
To Steamer (for self) from Omaha City to St. Louis......	18 00
To drayage for baggage in Omaha and St. Louis	2 50
	$582 50

PART VI.

FROM 1860 TO FATHER DE SMET'S DEATH, 1873.[1]

Relations with the Government, Missionary Work and other Matters.

Itinerary for the years 1860 to 1873.

1860.

IN St. Louis most of the year — August 24th went to Chicago, returning via Quincy and Palmyra — In September left St. Louis for Europe — Embarked at New York on the *Fulton* and crossed the Atlantic (twelfth time) to Havre — Went to Paris and thence, via Lille, to Belgium — Visited the principal cities of Belgium and Holland.

Distance traveled, 6,803 miles.

1861.

Left Belgium March 27th — Went to Paris and thence to Havre with three novices and took passage on the steamer *Fulton* — Commenced voyage April 2d (thirteenth trip across the Atlantic)—Arrived in New York the night of April 14th-15th — Left New York on the 17th and arrived in St. Louis on the 19th.

"During the summer I visited the East — I was in Washington during the Bull Run battle and witnessed its fatal consequences.

"Late in the fall I had a sick call in the neighborhood of Peoria."

Distance traveled, 6,780 miles.

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[1] All the letters in this part are here published for the first time.

1862.

Left for Washington January 10th and returned February 22d — In April made a trip to Chicago and back — Early in May left St. Louis on the steamer *Spread Eagle* for the Rocky Mountains — Arrived at Fort Benton June 20th — Returned by the same boat to Fort Leavenworth — Went thence to St. Mary's Mission and reached St. Louis in August.

Visited Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, returning to St. Louis by the same route —"While in Washington I heard the roar of cannon at the Battle of Antietam."

Distance traveled, 9,518 miles.

1863.

Left St. Louis May 9th on the steamer *Alone* bound for Fort Benton — June 21st the boat was stopped by low water at the mouth of Milk river — Passengers detained there about four weeks while transportation was being sent for to Benton — Arrived at Fort Benton August 15th.

Father De Smet decided, on account of danger from the Indians, to return to St. Louis via Panama — Set out August 25th — Crossed the Divide on the 29th — Reached St. Ignatius September 5th — Left on the 8th — Reached the Sacred Heart Mission September 18th — Left on the 23d — Reached Vancouver October 8th.

Set sail from Portland October 13th — Went to Vancouver island — Reached San Francisco on the 21st — Left on November 3d — Crossed Panama on November 18th and same day took the steamer *North Star* for New York, where they arrived on the 26th, Thanksgiving day.

Left New York on December 9th for Washington, where Father De Smet had business to transact relating to the Indians — Left Washington and reached St. Louis December 17th, "safe and sound."

Distance traveled, 11,782 miles.

1864.

April 16th American Fur Company steamboat *Yellowstone* left St. Louis for Fort Benton — Father De Smet left on the 20th by rail, hoping to overtake the boat — At Leavenworth found the boat fifteen hours ahead — Took stage to Omaha where he overtook the boat, joining it April 28th — Went as far as Fort Berthold where he arrived June 9th — Went principally at the instance of the Government to see if peace could not be brought about with the Sioux — General Sully, however, was determined to fight anyway, and so De Smet returned in order not to compromise himself, as a missionary, in the eyes of the Indians — Reached St. Louis "at the end of August" — On the 3d of September he left for Washington to report the result of his expedition and see about the draft and other matters — Returned to St. Louis October 4th — Left St. Louis October 12th and embarked at New York on steamer *China* on the 20th for Europe (fourteenth crossing of the Atlantic) — Landed in Liverpool about the end of October — Went to Stonyhurst and thence via London to Brussels early in November — Thence to Rome, where he arrived November 19th — Saw the Pope several times — Returned to Belgium in December.

Distance traveled, 14,030 miles.

1865.

Visited Holland, Luxemburg, England and Ireland — Met with success everywhere — June 7th embarked at Liverpool on the *City of New York* with twelve novices and four sisters (fifteenth crossing of the Atlantic) — Reached New York June 19th — Left New York on the 26th and reached St. Louis June 30th — Remained there the rest of the year.

Distance traveled, 6,416 miles.

1866.

Left St. Louis April 9th on the *Ontario* — Reached Fort Benton June 7th — Back in St. Louis probably by July 20th — Remained in St. Louis the rest of the year.

Distance traveled, 6,200 miles.

1867.

In February visited Washington and New York and returned to St. Louis — April 12th left St. Louis for the upper country — Went to the Yellowstone river where he arrived June 28th — Visited the various tribes on the way — Returned to St. Louis late in August — Remained in St. Louis the rest of the year.

Distance traveled, 6,880 miles.

1868.

March 30th left St. Louis by rail with Government commission for Cheyenne — Arrived there April 6th after stops at Omaha and North Platte — Made an excursion to Sherman Pass — Commissioners then went north to Fort Laramie and De Smet went back to Omaha, where he took the steamer *Columbia* for Fort Rice — Left Omaha April 21st and reached Fort Rice May 24th — Remained a few days at the fort preparing for journey to the camp of the hostile Indians.

June 3d set out for the Powder river country where the hostiles were supposed to be — Reached the camp in the valley of Powder river at its mouth June 19th — Remained two days with the Indians and succeeded in inducing them to send a deputation to Fort Rice — Set out before sunrise June 21st — Entered Fort Rice on the 30th — The great Peace Council took place on July 2d.

Father De Smet set out on his return journey July 4th — Stopped at Fort Sully — Resumed journey on 11th — Went to Fort Leavenworth and St. Mary's Mission — Reached St. Louis apparently about August 20th, that being the date of his first letter after his return — Left St. Louis for New York November 21st — Embarked November 25th on the *City of Baltimore* and crossed the ocean (sixteenth crossing)— Two days before reaching Liverpool he fell during a storm and broke two ribs — December 11th left Liverpool for London, and thence to Termonde where he remained the rest of the year.

Distance traveled, 10,000 miles.

1869.

Father De Smet spent the first five months of the year in visiting the principal places in Belgium, Holland, France and England — June 12th embarked on the *City of Dublin* for America — Stopped to coal at Queenstown, Ireland — Continued voyage same day (seventeenth crossing of Atlantic)— Reached New York June 29th — July 2d left New York for St. Louis and arrived there on the 4th — In October made a trip to Omaha and back; in November to St. Mary's and back; and in December to Chicago and Milwaukee and back.

Distance traveled, 9,799 miles.

1870.

In St. Louis until June 1st when he set out for the upper Missouri to see about establishing a mission among the Sioux — Went as far up as Grand river — Returned early in August — During the fall made a journey to Chicago and Milwaukee — Remained in St. Louis the rest of the year.

Distance traveled, 4,200 miles.

1871.

Father De Smet remained in St. Louis until June 25th when he left for Europe — Embarked July 1st on the steamer *City of New York* — Crossed the Atlantic (eighteenth time) and reached Liverpool July 14th — There is no available record to show just what Father De Smet's travels in Europe were in 1871, but they must have been extensive. There may also have been some short trips in the United States.

The total distance traveled for the year mounts up to 10,150 miles.

1872.

Father De Smet embarked for America on the *City of Paris* April 11th —Arrived in New York April 21st (nineteenth crossing)— Went to St. Louis and remained there the rest of the year.

Distance traveled, 4,800 miles.

1873.

Father De Smet remained in St. Louis until the date of his death, May 23d, when his remains were taken to the Jesuit Novitiate at Florissant and there interred.[3]

[3] Father De Smet crossed the Atlantic nineteen times instead of twenty-one as the Linton Album records it. Add to this number two Atlantic voyages between New York and Panama and three on the Pacific (one between Cape Horn and the Columbia and two between Panama and the Columbia) makes twenty-four long ocean voyages.

The foregoing itineraries are based primarily upon two records: One in letter-book form comes down to 1853, and the other in the Linton Album comes down to 1872 with a few obscure places. The distances in the Indian country are all greatly overstated, although they were the received distances until actual surveys were made.

There is an important error in both records for the years 1868 and 1869 in the omission of 5,200 miles travel before starting to Europe in 1868.

CHAPTER I.

VOYAGES TO FORT BENTON IN 1862 AND 1863.

Six-weeks' voyage up the Missouri — Everywhere welcomed by Indians — Brings supplies to Blackfoot mission — Eastern trip — The 1863 journey — The Sioux war — Pleasant voyage — Water low — Passengers and freight landed at Milk River — Indian attack fortunately averted — Hard wagon trip — Baptizes Crow children — Decides to return by the Pacific.

EARLY in May, 1862,[1] I left St. Louis in the steamboat *Spread Eagle*[2] of the Honorable St. Louis Fur Company. [Pierre Chouteau, Jr. Company, popularly called the American Fur Company.] The respectable and worthy captain, Mr. Charles P. Chouteau, had had a little chapel prepared on board — I had the great consolation of offering the holy sacrifice of the mass every day, during my long voyage. The boat was bound for Fort Benton, in the Rocky Mountain region and upwards of 3,000 miles, by the Missouri river, from the mouth of that stream. The river was bank-full at the time, and a great deal of power was required to stem the current. We were six weeks in making the trip.

At various places or stations we found more or less numerous camps of Indians on the banks of the river. The boat would stop to distribute among the savages the Government gifts or annuities, and I would seize all these precious moments to visit them in their buffalo-skin dwellings or cabins; and on all these occasions I passed my days and nights among them. I was welcomed everywhere—they met me most eagerly, with the calumet of peace in their hands, and showed me a most simple but hearty kindness. They listened to my teachings with much diligence and attention. It was most touching and consoling to have the poor Indian mothers come to me, leading their little children or carrying them in their arms or on their backs, and to hear them say "O Black-robe! oh, bless our little children and offer them to the Great Spirit;" signifying in their simple language that they would have them regenerated in the holy waters of baptism. Thus I had the consolation, in these various meetings and visits, of giving baptism to more than 900 infants and to a good number of the sick and aged.

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[1] Extract of a letter to Reverend Father Boone, containing a synopsis of my trip among the Indians in 1862.— *Author.* (From the French of the Linton Album, pp. 58-60.)

[2] For particulars of this interesting voyage see *History Missouri River Navigation.*

The following little anecdote, connected with the last baptisms administered, may perhaps not be without interest. It was among a band of Yankton Sioux; I had finished the ceremonies of a large number of baptisms, and night was falling. I was about leaving the place for my lodging, when I saw something moving, some distance off, dragging itself along the path. I stopped, in doubt, to see what this strange animal or moving mass might be. On approaching it, I was surprised to behold a poor old Indian woman, covered with wretched rags of buffalo-skin—a cripple, having lost the use of her hands and feet. She had heard the news, that the Black-robe, the priest, had arrived in their camp and was baptizing the children, and she, too, desiring that happiness as well, had dragged herself a considerable distance from her lodge to come to me. On seeing me, the good old woman raised her two palsied hands and cried "Oh, my father, have pity on me—I too wish to be the child of the Great Spirit—oh, pour water on my forehead and speak the holy words! The whites call me Marie—it is the name of the good and great mother in heaven; when I die, I wish to go to my good mother." I instructed the poor Indian Marie and she received baptism, with the most pious sentiments and in transports of joy and happiness. *"Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam coelum possidebunt."* Marie had spent several years in a French half-breed family and been instructed in a number of points of our holy religion.

Contagious diseases, especially among the small children, often ravage our poor Indian tribes, since they have no remedies and no treatment but that of their medicine-men. A large number have died since my visit, and already know the bliss of the elect, a precious prize of baptism, through the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Indian tribes that I last visited belong for the most part to the nations of the Blackfeet, the Crows, the Assiniboins, Minnetarees, Aricaras, Mandans and Sioux. This last nation is considered the most numerous on the plains, and reckons 30,000 to 40,000 souls (1862). Circumstances did not allow me to penetrate very far into the interior of the Sioux country, on account of the great uprising or warfare made upon the whites by several of their tribes in the northwest. They are said to be very cruel, and there have been frightful and terrible massacres. They have ravaged principally along the frontiers of Wisconsin and Minnesota. More than 300 Indians have been taken prisoners by the American troops. Thirty-eight of them have been hung. Before their execution, thirty-two requested baptism of the priest who was on the spot. There has been a great outcry in the United States against the execution of these prisoners of war, who seemed to be given over to the vengeance of the whites of the frontier. The unhappy Indians are often wronged, insulted and outraged beyond measure by the whites, and there is no recourse open to them for the obtaining of justice. Driven to desperation, they dig up the war hatchet and utter the cry of vengeance against the palefaces, whom they consider their enemies — woe to those, then, who fall into their hands. With the Lord's favor, I shall this spring (1863) make a fresh effort to reach the

Sioux country, and, I hope, with more success than last year. I commend myself to your good prayers.[8]

On reaching the base of the Rocky Mountains, I met two of our Italian Fathers (Giorda and Imoda), and two coadjutor Brothers, who have settled among the Blackfoot tribes. This nation numbers about 10,000 souls. The meeting was unexpected on the part of my dear brothers in Christ, and the joy was all the greater. I found them in a rather bad way, lacking, in fact, almost everything, even necessaries, and I had expected as much. Thanks to a remnant of the funds obtained in Belgium (in 1860-61), I was enabled to bring them assistance. I had the great consolation to find them safe and sound, and to procure for them, in good order, a fine assortment of church ornaments and sacred vessels, victuals for nearly a year, garments and bed coverings, which they sadly needed, agricultural and carpenters' tools, several plows, some picks and shovels, an ambulance and a wagon — all of which were absolutely necessary, in a new establishment among 10,000 nomadic savages, whom it is desired to christianize and civilize.

These worthy brothers are laboring among the Blackfeet with tireless zeal and courage. At the time of my visit they had been barely six months in that country, and the number of baptisms inscribed on the register came to upwards of

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[8] "After leaving Fort Benton I visited several camps of Blackfeet, Crows, Assiniboins, and Mandans, the nation of the Minnetarees or Grosventres, who were all in one place, and the Aricaras. When I left St. Louis it was my desire to visit the numerous tribes of the Sioux or Dakotas, supposed to be thirty to forty thousand in number, and to spend three months among them. An unfortunate incident prevented my doing it. A few days before my arrival at Fort Pierre, the head chief of the Sioux tribes had been killed by his own people, because of his friendship for the whites. Consequently the country was in confusion and much agitated against the whites. It was impossible for me to obtain an interpreter or guides to accompany me into the interior of the country where they dwell, which is very vast. I have put off this visit and mission to next spring." (Extract from letter to Father-General, August 18, 1862.)

700 children and adults. The mission is dedicated to the Apostle Peter. The number of Christians has grown considerably since my visit. The sight of this interesting little Christian community, growing so admirably in that far-off desert, after centuries of abandonment, was to me a most consoling spectacle, showing the power of the Lord's grace over hearts so barbarous and but now so guilty — for the Blackfeet are considered the most barbarous and cruel of all the tribes of the plains.[4]

I offered the holy sacrifice of the mass among them, by way of thanksgiving. An Indian choir, composed of men and women, young men and girls, chanted the litanies of the Holy Virgin and songs to the glory of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and in praise of his Good Mother, "whom all nations call blessed." Everything was sung in the language of the country. A goodly number drew devoutly near to the holy table.

The Blackfoot Mission, though to the east of the Rocky Mountains, belongs among the western missions; namely, the Flatheads, the Pend d'Oreilles, the Kootenais, the Kalispels, the Cœur d'Alènes and the Kettle Falls Indians. There have been latterly (1864) many conversions and baptisms of children among the Spokans or Zingomenes and the Nez Percés. All these tribes are located on the Pacific slope. Six new little churches were in process of construction.

Upon my return to Leavenworth I visited the Mission of St. Mary among the Potawatomies, seventy-five miles inland.

At my return in St. Louis in August, I visited several of the eastern cities — Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, Boston,

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[4] The head chief of the Blackfeet is named Apistotoko, or "Father of a Large Family." He is a remarkable and most exceptional type. The countenance of this savage is almost square; it has something of the lion in it. Apistotoko wears a vest. His head is surmounted with a sort of turban adorned with plumes. He is armed with a shield and a short sabre, larger at the point than at the guard, and ending in a half-circle.— *Author's Note.*

New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and returned to St. Louis by the same route. Whilst in Washington I heard the roar of the cannon at the battle of Antietam.

University of St. Louis, March 26, 1864.[8]

Dear and Respectable Doctor:

I come to fulfill my promise and give you my little story of my last mission and long excursion among the wandering tribes of the upper plains of the Missouri, in the Territory of Nebraska and in the eastern portion of the great new Territory of Idaho, or the Region of Flowers.[9] Idaho lies north of the Territories of Utah and Colorado and west of Nebraska. It covers four degrees of latitude, from 41° to 45° in its eastern half and from 42° to 46° in its western half, and 13° of longitude, from 104° to 117°.

My mission was not as fortunate, nor its fruits as abundant, as I wished, owing to the great and unhappy war waged by the numerous nation of the Sioux, which numbers 30,000 to 40,000 souls in its various bands. They are scattered over a vast territory, stretching from the Upper Mississippi on the east to the Black Hills [of Wyoming] on the west, and from the forks of the Platte river on the south to the Mine-Wakan or Devil's lake, in latitude 48°, on the north.

I had the consolation, notwithstanding, of conferring the holy sacrament of baptism on nearly 500 persons, most of them little innocents, the sick in danger of death, or savages greatly advanced in age. A number died during my stay among them, and had the happiness to obtain the favors of their regeneration in God. Let me add here my little tribute of gratitude to the ladies of St. Louis and Philadelphia, who have contributed so charitably to the needs of my mission. Besides their pious donations of money and of chaplets, medals and images, they procured for me about 1,000 little shirts and dresses, the work of their own hands, for the infants to be newly baptized. The very sincere and genuine joy of the poor Indian mothers was shown in their happiness at being able to dress their children, in order to present them decently on this solemn occasion. Their distinguished charity will without doubt obtain the blessing of heaven, for it is written "*Quod uni ex minimis meis fecistis, mihi fecistis, dicit Dominus.*"

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[8] "Letter to Father Terwecoren, S. J., copied for the album of my friend, Dr. Linton" [p. 61 *et seq.*]. From the French.

[9] Idaho is a Shoshone word, signifying "the lustrous rim shown by the snowy peaks as the sun rises behind and over them."

The unhappy war which is now raging so fiercely over all the extent of the Great Desert, east of the Rocky Mountains, has, like so many other Indian wars, been provoked by numerous injustices and misdeeds on the part of the whites, and even of agents of the Government. For years and years they have deceived the Indians with impunity in the sale of their holdings of land, and afterward by the embezzlement, or rather the open theft, of immense sums paid them by the Government in exchange therefor. The Indians, driven to extremity, after being swindled and robbed through a long series of years, and without being able to obtain any justice against their oppressors, utter at last their terrible war-cry against the whole race of the enemy; in their own words, they "thirst for blood," "dig up the tomahawk," "raise the warclub," "prepare eagle feathers to decorate their hair" (every feather standing for a scalp taken).

For two years the Sioux have been ranging the frontiers of Minnesota, the Missouri and the interior of the great plains in search of victims to sate their terrible and brutal vengeance; without regard either to age or to sex, they massacre indiscriminately all the whites that come to their hand. Over 800 victims are reckoned already as having fallen beneath their barbarous blows since the beginning of hostilities.

This war, according to the reports, has already cost the Government over $20,000,000. The speculators, contractors and *ejusdem generis* of the region will do what they are able to protract this unlucky war, because it is so much money in their pockets. I speak of this to give an idea of the cause of this war and of its terrible consequences. Last year thirty-seven prisoners were hung in Minnesota — of this number, thirty-four asked and received baptism at the hands of a priest, [Ravoux] who was fortunately in the neighborhood. All the hostile tribes of the Sioux are still plunged in the ignorance of paganism.

On the 9th of last May I left St. Louis, accompanied by two Italian Brothers destined for the mountain missions. Our steamboat trip was pleasant and fortunate. Every day I had the consolation and happiness of celebrating the holy sacrifice of the mass in my little stateroom. Everywhere, at the various posts along the river where the boat stopped, I was received with kindness and respect by all the tribes, eager to hear the word of the Lord. I employed all these precious moments, whether by day or by night, in instructing them and regenerating in the holy waters of baptism the many little ones that they made haste to bring me.

Among the principal tribes that I met along the Missouri were various bands of Sioux, Assiniboins, Crows, Gros-ventres of the Prairie, Piegans and the three joined nations, the Mandans, Aricaras and Minnetarees, forming a single village of about 3,000 souls. The text of Jeremiah may well be applied to them: *"Parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis."* For years these poor savages have been asking persistently for the help of missionaries.

In this water-journey of 2,400 miles, we met no obstacle whatever, neither from the enemies that infested the country, nor from the numerous snags, sawyers, and sand-bars which abound in the river throughout its length. The heat was often very great, even stifling, and more than once the wind was like the sirocco of Africa. The Fahrenheit thermometer marked more than 100° of heat on several occasions. The water was so low that the captain found himself under the hard necessity of putting all his ninety passengers and all his cargo (200 tons) ashore in the forest that covers the mouth of Milk river, 300 miles distant from his destination, Fort Benton. This was on the 29th of June.

Every passenger chose a spot for himself in the forest and bestowed himself as best he could. General Harney had made me a present of his big camp tent before I left St. Louis; I had my little chapel, my little kitchen, the necessary bedding and provisions, and in less than an hour, with the help of the two brothers, we were properly established, under the shade of some big cottonwoods.

Here we were visited by a great number of savages, Crows and Grosventres of the Prairies. On the 4th of July, as the camp was making ready to celebrate the great day of American Independence, we had an alarm, and escaped a great danger as if by a miracle. A numerous party of hostile Sioux, of some 600 warriors, discovered our camp and attempted an attack. Two of our men were wounded; one received two arrows, in the fleshy parts of the arm and thigh, and the other was shot in the body with an arrow that went in up to the feather. Immediately every man seized his arms and made ready for a desperate defense, with the chances plainly against us, by reason of our small number.

Without thinking long of the danger, but full of trust in God and in the good prayers of a great number of little children, of my brothers in Jesus Christ and of many pious souls, who had promised me their assistance, by their pious remembrance, during all the time of my mission — I went out to meet the scouts of the hostile band. Fortunately, I was recognized, and they expressed their astonishment by cries and gestures. One of the first "partisans" who took my hand exclaimed "This is the Black-robe who saved my sister." It was the son of Red Fish, head chief of the

Ogallalas, the facts of whose case I have related in the *Western Missions and Missionaries.* This meeting was truly providential. I talked to him and his companions for about an hour. On leaving them I made them a little present of coffee, sugar and crackers, and I saw them depart with no further thought of attacking our camp.

Other travelers were less fortunate than we. Several steamboats that left St. Louis at about the same time as ours had to withstand sundry attacks from the savages, in which they lost several men. One large keelboat was sunk and all its crew destroyed. We understood better then that the war-cry was really ringing all along that river, over which our passage had been so quiet and peaceful.[7]

Let me add here a word concerning the Sioux of the Missouri river. Their habitations or buffalo-skin lodges number 3,000, each of which shelters eight to ten individuals, one-fifth of whom may be considered able to bear arms; they can consequently furnish 5,000 to 6,000 warriors. Such is the fresh enemy that the Americans have drawn upon themselves by their numerous injustices. Volumes would be needed to contain them all — at present the hearts of the Sioux are full of vengeance and urge them to turbulence and carnage.

After a wait of four weeks at the mouth of Milk river — after having had my body poisoned and bloated by a plant, commonly called *l'herbe à la puce* (the Rhus Toxicodendron of the botanists) with which the soil of the forest was covered — at last, on the 30th of July, we saw a long train of wagons arrive from Benton, to transport the freight of the boat. The good Fathers of the Mission of St. Peter, among the Blackfeet, sent me a comfortable conveyance for the journey, and I took possession of it with the two Brothers.

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[7] The perils of navigation on this river in 1863 can hardly be overstated. The Sioux tribes were uncompromisingly hostile. General Sibley was carrying his successful campaign from Minnesota to the Missouri. General Sully was moving up the east bank of the Missouri with a large force. The most constant vigilance was required by the boats to get through at all. A Mackinaw boat containing twenty-one men and three women was attacked at the mouth of Apple creek just before General Sibley arrived there and all the passengers killed. Captain La Barge with the *Robert Campbell* lost three men near Fort Berthold. Father De Smet does not represent the situation as bad as it actually was.

A journey of 300 miles, with carts loaded with 5,000 to 6,000 pounds, through the midst of a wilderness, where grass had almost entirely disappeared, by reason of the great drought of the spring and summer — for not a drop of water had fallen in months — where all the rivers were dry, leaving only here and there a little pool of stagnant salty water — altogether, this passage was no small affair for the travelers, and for their horses and oxen as well; the whole region bore the imprint of desolation.

We encamped every evening beside one or several of these water holes, which supplied us with fish in abundance. Our cattle and horses scattered over a vast expanse, to graze on the dry and scanty herbage. By night we formed a corral, or circle of wagons and carriages, wherein to keep the animals in safety, protected against attacks from horse-thieves, whether white or Indian, by whom this region is infested. By the way our hunters raised from time to time buffalo, elk, deer, bighorn, beaver, prairie chickens, wild ducks and geese, furnishing us more or less our portion of fresh meat. We crossed three branches of Milk river, the divière au François [Willow creek?], the Beaver and the Sureau [White Horse creek?], the Marias and Teton rivers, tributaries of the Missouri, and passed below the Little Rocky and Bear Paw Mountains, two isolated chains standing in the plains, east of Benton.

After a somewhat painful journey, we arrived at Fort Benton on the day of the glorious Assumption of the Holy Virgin. There I had the great consolation of meeting Father Imoda, of the Mission of St. Peter, who had come thither to see me. We tarried here several days, to recover from our fatigue as well as to instruct and baptize a goodly number of Crow or Absaroka children. They reached the fort at about the same time as ourselves, having come to exchange their peltries for such things as they needed. The Mission of St. Peter is situated on the Missouri ten miles above the Great Falls, and seventy-five miles from Benton.

I had thus far fulfilled the wishes of my superiors; I had brought the two Italian Brothers to the first Rocky Mountain mission. My own principal object was a missionary visit to the wandering tribes of the plains; this I had accomplished only in part. When I left St. Louis, I had intended to see a very large number of Indians during the summer and fall, but local conditions and the dangers of the cruel Sioux war, had absolutely blocked my plan. The contagion of this war had spread to the upper tribes of the Sioux, who had hitherto been at peace with the whites. The reports that reached us every day, of robberies and massacres committed by the Indians of the plains, on one hand — and on the Salt Lake route by marauders and murderers of another species, the off-scourings of civilization, living by robbery and assassination on the unhappy travelers whom they meet — caused me to take the resolution of returning to St. Louis by the Pacific Ocean. That is not only the safest route, but the most prompt, with its regular line of steamships, by way of the Isthmus of Panama and Aspinwall.

Life, Letters and Travels of Father De Smet among the North American Indians.

COUNCIL WITH THE HOSTILE SIOUX ON THE YELLOWSTONE RIVER.

LIFE, LETTERS AND TRAVELS

OF

FATHER PIERRE-JEAN DE SMET, S. J.

1801-1878

Missionary Labors and Adventures among the Wild Tribes of the
North American Indians, Embracing Minute Description of Their
Manners, Customs, Games, Modes of Warfare and Torture,
Legends, Tradition, etc., All from Personal Observations
Made during Many Thousand Miles of Travel,
with Sketches of the Country from St. Louis
to Puget Sound and the Altrabasca

*Edited from the original unpublished manuscript Journals
and Letter Books and from his Printed Works with
Historical, Geographical, Ethnological and other Notes;
Also a Life of Father De Smet*

MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

HIRAM MARTIN CHITTENDEN
Major, Corps of Engineers, U. S. A.

AND

ALFRED TALBOT RICHARDSON

FOUR VOLUMES
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CHAPTER II.

RETURN TO ST. LOUIS VIA PANAMA.

Over Mullan Pass to St. Ignatius Mission — New churches — Devout Indians — Forest fires — Captain Mullan's report — Father De Smet's full basket — Down the Columbia — New towns and new ways in the Northwest — California — The further journey home.

ON[1] the 25th of August, I bade farewell to my dear brothers in Jesus Christ and left the Mission of St. Peter, to repair to that of St. Ignatius, west of the Rocky Mountains. The distance is about 250 miles, by the route laid out by the Government engineers. It leads across several small rivers, tributaries of the Missouri, such as the Prior, the Dearborn, the Prickly Pear, etc. This last might better be called Hop river, for this plant covers, literally, every bush and all the lower branches of the trees in the valley. Anise (*pimpinella anisum*) likewise abounds.

On the 29th, toward noon, we attained the summit of the great chain of the Rocky Mountains, by Mullan's Pass, at an elevation of 5,980 feet above sea-level. On the 5th of September I reached the Mission of St. Ignatius among the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles. A fine frame church, ninety by forty feet, has been erected here. I found the mission prosperous and flourishing. Notwithstanding this, it is impossible to overestimate the dangers which, just at this time, are threatening all the mountain tribes, through the approach of the whites, the ease with which liquors — "fire water" — so fatal to the Indians, can be obtained, and the accompaniment of all the vices and excesses of our modern civilization; especially as understood and practiced by our American pioneers. These things must be seen to be appreciated and believed.

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[1] Translated from the French of the Linton Album, pp. 65-69.

The worthy and zealous Father Grassi, superior of this mission, has had all the materials prepared for the construction of a hospital and school buildings. He was, however, at a loss where to find nuns to conduct these new establishments — still he continued his work, trusting to the good providence of the Lord. I could do no less than encourage him as well as I was able in his useful labor, so necessary to the welfare of his neophytes, and the good Father's hopes were not in vain. On my return to St. Louis I approached, by letter, the worthy Sisters of Charity of the Maison de la Providence at Montreal, Canada. The Superior-General has generously granted my request; she answers me "that she grants most willingly this first colony of sisters for the Mission of St. Ignatius, and that she will do as much for other missions where there may be a need of sisters." I hastened to impart to the superior of the mountain missions this consoling piece of good news — and as for means, one may hope that the holy providence of the Lord will intervene here also.

On my way, I found the Reverend Father Ravalli in the St. Mary's or Flathead valley, with one Brother, occupied, with the aid of a few Indians, in building a new church. The site is twenty miles distant from the old Mission of St. Mary. In the same valley, thirty miles lower down, another little church has been put up for the use of French and Canadian colonists — and another still at the Flathead lake for the half-breeds and Indians. A church was in course of construction at Bannock, a mining town, where Father Grassi has obtained a subscription of $1,500; the Protestants themselves contributed. There was a demand for several other churches in various mining regions. At the mission of the Kootenais, a branch of that of St. Ignatius, the good Indians have built a little church and a presbytery, for the use of the missionary who visits them. They remain in their primitive simplicity, fervor and zeal. They are the admiration of all the travelers who visit them, for their diligence in all religious practices, their hospitality and love of justice. Theft is unknown among them.

Wherever I met with any of our Mission Indians, they overwhelmed me with marks of friendliness. The day after I had crossed the divide, I came toward evening upon one of their hunting camps. They were ignorant of my being in that country. I saw the chief sound the Angelus, and all his people prostrate themselves devoutly to recite it. This edifying Christian spectacle is repeated thrice every day in the remote wilderness. I came up in time to preside at the evening prayers of these dear children of my heart.

That same evening, to the great consolation of the Indians, and especially to mine, the Reverend Father Giorda, superior of all that mission, arrived in the camp. He was returning from California, and was then on his way from St. Ignatius to St. Peter's. Our mutual joy was great and profound. Let me add that it is in the desert that such a meeting, between two brothers in Jesus Christ, can be most truly appreciated. We exchanged eagerly all our little budget of news, good and bad — our hopes and our fears, for the present and the future of our dear missions and our dear neophytes.

The camp was going "to buffalo," east of the Rocky Mountains. Father Giorda gave them a long instruction that evening, and the confessions lasted far into the night, in their desire to approach devoutly the holy table. On the morrow I celebrated, *sub dio,* the most holy sacrifice of the mass, and addressed them some consoling words concerning religion and the joy with which this fortunate meeting inspired me. All the neophytes surrounded the humble altar, made of willows and poles, and chanted in chorus the praises of the Lord and the litanies of our August Mother the Holy Virgin. A large number piously received the holy communion.

Father Giorda and I remained in camp all this fine day, with these good Pend d'Oreilles and Flatheads around us,

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hungry to listen to us. It was a pleasant day, and under the circumstances doubly beautiful, and certainly, to me, one of the most agreeable and consoling of all my long wanderings. I gave baptism to several new-born infants, and afterward distributed medals, scapulars and chaplets among such as needed them, and fish-hooks among the young men — an article very necessary and very much sought after among them. All day long they were coming to share their fish with us, and offered us big strings of fine spotted mountain trout (*salmo fario*). Others brought us potatoes, onions, carrots, turnips and fruits of various sorts, which they seemed to have in abundance, the fruit of their own industry.

I left St. Ignatius' Mission on the 8th of September. We were one day reaching Clark's Fork and three days going down the valley of this river, as far as the mouth of the river St. Regis and Borgia. Here we were kept by rain until the 16th. On that day we crossed the Regis-Borgia thirty-seven times. Different kinds of pine and fir abound in this valley. The undergrowth, in the mountainous part that we traversed, is very thick, and consists principally of a sort of bush with velvety leaves, which, when properly dried, yield an aromatic tea, very agreeable and beneficial. We arrived at the summit of the Cœur d'Alène Mountains about four in the afternoon. This is called Sohon[5] Pass and its elevation is 5,100 feet above sea-level.

Along the river in the Cœur d'Alène valley the forests are extremely thick, and one cannot but admire the astonishing thickness and height of the pines and cedars. I measured several of these giants of the forest, the circumference of which was five, six and even seven fathoms. In the shade of the cedars the Lychnis of Canada (or *Asaron Canadensis*) grows in profusion; it is a medical plant, of which Charboni, in his history of New France (botanical section) tells wonders. The *Solanum trifolium,* with its handsome flower, likewise attracts attention everywhere.

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[5] Over the Cœur d'Alène Mountains between the headwaters of the Regis-Borgia and the Cœur d'Alène river. Named for Captain Mullan's guide in his explorations of this country, 1858-1862.

A forest fire was raging during our passage, and had spread over a dozen miles of the mountain side and even to their highest parts. The smoke was very thick, and thousands of tree-trunks, fallen one upon another in confusion, obstructed the regular road and all the surface of the ground. We succeeded at last, axe in hand, and after plenty of minor miseries, in getting out of all the obstacles caused by the conflagration. In the course of the 17th we crossed the Cœur d'Alène river forty-two times. On the 18th we reached the Mission of the Sacred Heart.

The mission among the Cœur d'Alènes continues to prosper, under the prudent management of the excellent and worthy Father Gazzoli and his zealous companion, Father Caruana, and the good Brother Huybrechts from Antwerp and three other brothers. The Cœur d'Alènes continue to give great satisfaction and consolation to their worthy missionaries, by their constancy in the practices of religion and their perseverance in the faith. May heaven preserve them from the dangerous contact of the whites! They are threatened unceasingly with the loss of their lovely fertile lands and of the advantageous position occupied by the mission.

Captain Mullan, of the United States army, speaks as follows in a report which has recently been published by order of the Government and at Government expense. You will find the paragraph somewhat long, but I prefer to give it entire. The captain puts the Indian question to his Government very directly — the response, or at least the ordinary practice, when the whites take possession of the lands of the Indians, is to push them farther back into the wilderness or to exterminate them.

The captain in his report praises the missionaries and their converts very highly, and goes on to say:

"They have chosen a beautiful site, on a hill in the middle of the mission valley, and it has always proved to the weary traveler and destitute emigrant a St. Bernard in the Cœur d'Alène Mountains. I fear that the location of our road, and the swarms of miners and emigrants that must pass here year after year, will so militate against the best interests of the mission that its present site will have to be changed or abandoned. This, for themselves and the Indians, is to be regretted; but I can only regard it as the inevitable result of opening and settling the country. I have seen enough of Indians to convince me of this fact: that they can never exist in contact with the whites; and their only salvation is to be removed far, far from their presence. But they have been removed so often that there seems now no place left for their further migration; the waves of civilization have invaded their homes from both oceans, driving them year after year toward the Rocky Mountains; and now that we propose to invade these mountain solitudes, to wrest from them their hidden wealth, where under heaven can the Indians go? And may we not expect to see these people make one desperate struggle in the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains for the maintenance of their last homes and the preservation of their lives? It is a matter that but too strongly commends itself to the early and considerate attention of the General Government. The Indian is destined to disappear before the white man, and the only question is, how it may best be done, and his disappearance from our midst be tempered with those elements calculated to produce to himself the least amount of suffering, and to us the least amount of cost."

You may see from this extract from Captain Mullan's report to his Government, the real tendency of what we have to fear for the future of the Indian tribes in the vast Idaho Territory.

To proceed with my tale, the Church of the Sacred Heart, with that of St. Ignatius, are the two monuments of the Rocky Mountains; they are well adorned with pictures and statues, which are the admiration as well of the whites as of the savages. This mission has two branch stations, with two little churches, one on the shores of the great Cœur d'Alène lake, the other among the tribe of the Spokans or Zingomenes, in a fair valley of the Spokan river. This tribe at one time had Calvinist or Presbyterian ministers; since the departure of these sectarians, conversions to our holy religion have been very numerous. The Mission of the Sacred Heart is at an elevation of 2,280 feet above sea-level.

Reverend Father Joset, who has been laboring with tireless zeal in the mountain missions for well nigh twenty years, is at the Mission of St. Paul at Colville, at the Kettle Falls of the Columbia. He was absent from his mission at the time of my arrival. I give below a few details concerning his apostolic labors, which he has given me since.

"Your Reverence knows that I am at St. Paul to reopen the mission. I have many excursions to make, among the Kalispels of the Great Lake of the Columbia, among the Pend d'Oreilles of the Bay, on Clark's Fork, one of its main tributaries, among the Simpoils, the Okinagans — but the church to finish, the house to build, keep me often at Colville, to my great regret.

"I am looking for my companion to arrive from one day to another; with two presidents, I hope that we shall be able to meet the needs of all, though there will be plenty of work for us both.

"On my return from Walla Walla, where I had been buying my supplies of provisions, etc. (October 16th), I arrived in time to bury two dead; to-morrow I go again to the new church, to try to push the work. I have just registered the eighty-second birth for this year, so that your Reverence can infer what the population of this district is. There are besides a great number of unmarried men, soldiers, miners, etc.

"Besides the whites and the Christian tribes, that is, the Kettles, the Gens des Lacs and the Kalispels, we have the Simpoils, the Tlakam, the people of the stone islands, the

Spiokensi and the Satlilku, who can only receive religious aid from St. Paul. All speak nearly the same language, and a great number of them have already received baptism. Your Reverence will observe that our task is large and our labors multifarious, in the administration of the holy sacraments and the instruction of so many tribes.

"Pray for us and have others do so, that we may accomplish worthily the duties that the Lord lays upon us; that is, that we may be good *religieux*, worthy children of St. Ignatius.

"I spend the greater part of my time in a tent, eating what comes, sometimes in abundance, sometimes in penury, performing my spiritual exercises as best I can, regulating my time by the sun and stars when the weather is clear, otherwise, by the occupations that offer. When I am among the Indians, my time is very much occupied, I hardly have leisure to do more than think of them and their spiritual and bodily profit. But amidst the whites, I seldom see them except on Sunday, unless I go after them myself.

"Although whisky is making great ravages among the Indians, especially at Colville, still the Lord has reserved himself a goodly number untouched by corruption. With these it is always the same avidity to hear the word of life, the same eagerness to approach the sacraments. As for the other bands, one may truthfully say '*Parvuli petierunt panem et non erat qui frangeret eis.*' I raise my hands to heaven, and full of trust in the divine goodness, I pray and hope that, this mission once re-established, it will be otherwise for the future."

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my dear brothers in Jesus Christ for the truly fraternal charity and kindness that they have shown me, during my short but consoling stay among them. May I, however, add that it occurred to one of the missionaries to compare me to the good St. Nicholas, "who never came with an empty basket." It was really a great happiness to me to be able, this time, to relieve my dear brothers in their pressing needs, and to share with them my little belongings. When one leaves the land of civilization for a long journey or mission among the Indian tribes, where everything is lacking, one necessarily takes precautions — and the benefactors of the missions in St. Louis had stocked me up very well. Father Grassi had just finished a new church, which had not one obolus' worth of ornaments, vestments nor sacred vessels; at his earnest entreaty, I let him have my little traveling chapel. His joy and gratitude repaid me amply, and made me forget the great privation I had laid myself under.

I have since learned that the Reverend Fathers have received the provisions, clothing, church vestments, tools, etc., intended to supply the different missions. My little cargo amounted in all to nearly 1,500 pounds. The worthy captain of the steamboat, Mr. Charles Chouteau, was so exceedingly obliging and charitable as to give me a free passage, together with the two brothers, as well as transportation for our baggage and all the things destined for the missions — a charity on his part, which would otherwise have cost us upward of $1,000. We shall pray, and venture to hope, that heaven will reward him, with all his respectable family, for his great goodness and charity to the missionaries and their missions. This Good work he repeats with pleasure every spring and at each departure for the mountains.

I[8] reached the Sacred Heart Mission on the 18th of September and left again on the 23d, in the best of company, that of the worthy Father Gazzoli, who had to go to Walla Walla in the interests of his mission, and of a respectable Irish physician, Mr. W. T. Martin, of Dublin, an old pupil of the College of Notre Dame of Namur. He has abundant claims on my most lively gratitude. With

[8] Translated from the French of the Linton Album, pp. 70-74.

true Christian charity, he bestowed all his care and attention on the sick and infirm savages in the camps we came across. Everywhere that Mr. Martin went he was the benefactor of our missions; I shall always recall with the most lively gratitude the really fraternal kindness and attention which he lavished on me from St. Louis to San Francisco. His intention was to continue his little tour, returning to Dublin by way of the Sandwich Islands, the Philippines, Japan, China and the East Indies — almost the only parts of the world that he had not yet visited. May heaven protect him — our poor prayers will go with him throughout his long and dangerous voyages.

The principal rivers crossed on our route were the Spokan, the Paloos, the great Snake river or Clark's [Lewis'] Fork, the Touchat and the Walla Walla. After a very favorable and pleasant journey, on the eighth day we came to Walla Walla City (915 feet above sea-level). This is barely a town of yesterday, but already it has over 2,000 inhabitants, with all the signs of civilization in full swing. Its movement and commerce are very great; arrivals and departures of travelers and merchandise from morning till night. All the places adapted to agriculture are covered with vast farms, for thirty to forty miles around. The Very Reverend and very zealous Mr. Brouillet, Vicar-General of Monseigneur of Nisqually, was at Walla Walla, busied about the erection of a new church and a convent for the instruction of the children of the city, under the care of the excellent Sisters of Charity of Montreal.

On October 6th I took the stage coach for Wallula, a small town situated on the Columbia thirty miles distant from Walla Walla. Early on the morning of the 7th I embarked upon the steamboat which makes regular trips to the Dalles. To avoid the falls and the bad places in the river, there is a little railroad ten or a dozen miles long, which brought us in the evening to Dalles City, some 125 miles from Wallula. Settlements are still very scarce along the river, but we passed Umatilla, Grand Ronde City and Celilo.

Dalles City is a town of about the same age as Walla Walla, and has few, if any, more inhabitants. It is a better business town, because it controls a larger section of country. The respectable curate of this city is the Reverend Mr. Vermaersh, a Belgian. He has a handsome frame church and was watching the erection of a convent, for the education of youth, under the direction of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary. A series of little towns and villages are rising as if by enchantment, all along the river as we go down, and all through the interior of the country.[4]

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On the 8th of October I resumed my journey, going forty-five miles by steamboat. Five miles of this distance, through the Cascade Mountains, is made by rail. Then we take the steamer on the Columbia again and reach Vancouver toward evening. This is a town of 700 to 800 inhabitants. It is the ordinary residence of the Bishop of Nisqually, Monseigneur Magloire Blanchet. This diocese, established in 1850, contains six secular priests, eight regular priests, seven lay brothers, eleven churches and chapels, twenty sisters of charity, a college, four literary institutions for girls, three similar establishments for boys and four charitable institutions. The white Catholic population was 6,000 souls before gold was discovered, and must have more than tripled since. The arch-diocese of Oregon comprises twelve priests, ten churches, five religious institutions for the education of girls and five for that of boys. Portland is the ordinary residence of Monseigneur the Archbishop. It is the chief city and the commercial metropolis of Oregon, having some 6,000 inhabitants. Twelve Sisters of Jesus and Mary are conducting a fine religious institution for the education of girls, which is in a very prosperous condition, enjoying the confidence of the public, as well of Protestants as of Catholics. I owe the greatest gratitude to the venerable Archbishop of Oregon and to Monseigneur the Bishop of Nisqually, for the truly paternal kindness that they showed me — their Grandeurs overwhelmed me with charities in their hospitable residences at Portland and Vancouver. At Portland I had the pleasure of meeting a fellow-countryman, the Reverend and worthy Mr. Fierens, curate of the cathedral.

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[4] For omitted portions of this letter, see p. 1518.

On the 13th of October I set sail from Portland for San Francisco. We passed the dangerous bar at the mouth of the Columbia in safety. The steamer touched at Victoria, the capital of Vancouver Island, one of the new towns, admirably well situated, from both practical and picturesque standpoints. Its commerce is already important, and growing day by day by reason of its nearness to the mines on Fraser river and in the Caribou Mountains.

The worthy Monseigneur Demers, Bishop of Vancouver Island and the western part of the Rocky Mountains, in the English possessions, resides at Victoria. Besides the cathedral and the attached school, the Reverend Oblat Fathers have opened a college and church here. The Sisters of Jesus and Mary have a boarding-school, very well patronized, and a school for the instruction of girls. These worthy *religieuses,* like the respectable Sisters of Charity of the Asyle de la Providence of Montreal, are doing an immense amount of good in these remote regions. Monseigneur was absent, and had extended his apostolic tour in search of his flock as far as to the miners of the Caribou Mountains. The Reverend Oblat Fathers have several missions among the savages of the interior of the island and on Fraser river, where they are working with the greatest zeal and the happiest results; numerous conversions have everywhere crowned their noble efforts.

The steamer left Victoria on the 16th, and after a fortunate voyage, although with some severe gales, I arrived in San Francisco on the 21st — happy to find myself once more in the midst of my dear brothers in Jesus Christ.

Reverend Father Sopranis, visitor of all the missions of the Company of Jesus in North America, was awaiting me at San Francisco.

During my short stay in California, I visited the College of Santa Clara and the residence of our Fathers at San José. The college is in a very flourishing state, as is that at San Francisco. At San José I visited the establishment of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, whom I had conducted to America in 1843, to the number of five sisters. These first founders are still in good health. The sisters have now two fine large establishments in California. The convent at San José contains twenty-two professed sisters, seven novices and two aspirants; there are 120 pupils in the boarding-school, seventy-five day scholars and about the same number attending the school *gratis*. On Sundays they have a class for servant girls, and assemble the Catholics for Christian teaching. The convent at Marysville has fourteen sisters, who also have around them a good number of children, inmates and outsiders; and are following in the same line with the sisters of San José. The convents of the Sisters of Notre Dame are rendering very great service wherever they are established in America. Their scholars in Cincinnati and Boston are counted by thousands. This religious congregation is growing marvelously.

I left San Francisco on the 3d of November. I had the consolation and happiness to serve as companion to our Reverend Father Visitor in his voyage to New York. Several of our dear brothers of St. Ignatius College escorted us on board the vessel. The Pacific Ocean showed itself truly pacific, calm and beautiful, and varied scarcely at all throughout the voyage. We stopped at Acapulco, a Mexican port, to coal and take on the mails.

We reached Panama the night of the 17th, and the following morning we crossed the Isthmus of Panama, forty-seven miles, by rail. Toward evening of the same day we took ship again at Aspinwall, on the steamer *North Star*.

The weather continued clear and lovely, though varied at times by hard squalls and head-winds. The Reverend Father Visitor was very much inconvenienced and suffered much from sea-sickness, and for several days his condition alarmed me seriously. We passed within sight of Jamaica, Cuba and several low islands of the Bahama group, and at last, on the ninth day out, reached the good harbor of New York, on the 26th of November, Thanksgiving day by proclamation of the President of the United States. An hour later, we found ourselves in the midst of our dear brothers in Jesus Christ, at the College of St. Francis Xavier, who received us with their usual kindness, that is, with the most fraternal charity. The Reverend Father Provincial of Missouri was expected in New York, and I decided to wait for him.

On the 9th of December I set out to accomplish the last portion of my long journey. We came by way of Baltimore, Washington, Frederick City and Cincinnati, in all of which cities the Father Provincial had business to transact. In Washington I had also an errand — matters to bring before the Government in favor of our missions among the Indians. Finally we reached St. Louis safe and sound on the 17th of December. The day following, I offered the holy sacrifice of the altar, as a thanksgiving service for all the benefits received from heaven, in my long, painful and dangerous tour, upon rivers and seas and diverse lands — through numerous bands of hostile Indians — in the mountainous portion of Idaho, infested by white marauders and assassins of the lowest and vilest sort — and on the two great oceans, the Pacific and Atlantic, ranged at present by hostile ships of the American Confederacy. Glory to God alone and to the glorious Virgin Mary, for all the favors obtained.

I commend myself most specially to your good prayers. Every day at the altar I form most sincere vows in behalf of your Reverence and all our benefactors in Holland and

Belgium. We shall not cease to pray, with our dear neophytes, for their happiness here below and for eternity.

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I may later write you a longer account of my last trip, as you have called for in several of your letters; on this occasion I have little time left and must necessarily be short; I can only give you a cursory notice of the country I passed through.[6]

I left St. Louis on the 9th of May. I baptized several hundred children on my way up the Missouri, at the different posts where Indians had gathered to await the arrival of the boat. All were very kind and attentive to me. We had no hindrance, neither from enemies nor from any other obstacles on the river, till we reached the mouth of Milk river — 2,400 miles above St. Louis. Here, good depth of water failed, and the captain put all his passengers ashore (eighty in number) and 200 tons of merchandise; this left us about 300 miles from our destination. Three days after the boat had left us we were attacked by a powerful band of Sioux warriors, about 600 in number. Our camp was in an awful fix and no ways prepared for such a visit. All rushed to their arms in a rather confused manner. For my own part I had no time to reflect and had nothing to do with fire-arms. I recommended myself to the Lord, and full of confidence in the prayers which I knew were [being] offered for me in many places, I walked, or rather ran, up to the vanguard of the enemy, about forty strong. The partisan or captain of the band happily recognized me and he cried out, "It is the Black-gown, who saved my sister." They all looked bewildered, but were kind and shook hands with me. We had a long talk, in which I gave them some salutary advice, backed with some coffee, sugar and hard biscuits, and they left us without further molestation. The Indian brave, my friend, was the son of Red Fish, the great chief of the Sioux Ogallala tribe, whose history I have left on record,* as also that of his daughter, in the fifth of the *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres*, published in Belgium, and to which you may refer, should you feel inclined to know the whole circumstance. It would rather be too long for me to repeat it here. Only two of our men had received arrow wounds and happily recovered later.

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[6] Additional data upon the journey of 1863.—*From a letter to Father Murphy*, March 30, 1864.

We waited about a month at the mouth of Milk river, when horses and conveyances arrived from Fort Benton. After a tedious journey through a desolate country, where all vegetation had disappeared under the long summer drought, we reached the fort on the day of the glorious Assumption of the ever Glorious Blessed Virgin. I here met Father Imoda, and after a few days' rest, and having baptized a good number of Crow and Blackfoot children, we proceeded together to St. Peter's Mission, seventy-five miles distant.

The mission register contains about 1,500 baptisms of children and adults. Thousands of whites are flocking in the new Montana Territory in search of gold, within the district of St. Peter's Mission. They have erected several cities, of which the most conspicuous are Virginia City and Banack, with thousands of miners within and around them; so that the Fathers, two in number, will have their hands full, both with Indians and whites. * * * West of the mountains I met with many old friends among the Indians, who welcomed me among them with the utmost kindness and affection. The Missions of St. Ignatius, of the Sacred Heart, of St. Paul at Colville, were still prosperous and doing well. They direct some fifteen different stations, where small churches have been built. The Flatheads and Kalispels will soon have a convent. I obtained a little colony of Sisters of Charity of the *Asyle de la Providence* at Montreal, who will take charge of it. I passed through Walla Walla, Dalles City, Vancouver City and Portland in Oregon, where religion was progressing. Embarked at Portland, via Victoria in Vancouver Island and reached San Francisco on the 21st of October. The distance may be put down from Benton to San Francisco at 2,580 miles.

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* See pp. 630 and 791.

In California, the affairs of our Society look rather crooked, and I am afraid some of ours have not been over-prudent. No good can come from that quarter, unless kind Providence comes to our rescue; the presence of the Visitor has done nothing toward mending and filling the breach. I left in his company for Panama and Aspinwall, which we reached in due time and safe and sound, a distance of 2,347 miles. We next embarked for New York, 2,000 miles, where we were welcomed with open arms by the good Fathers of St. Xavier College — a few days' rest, and *en route de nouveau,* via Washington and St. Louis, which I reached on the 17th of December last. Please present my best respects to the good Fathers in New Orleans and pray for me.

CHAPTER III.

PEACE MISSION TO THE SIOUX IN 1864.

Still planning for the Sioux — Precarious state of health — Government's invitation to visit the hostiles puts him in a dilemma — Another voyage up the river — Changes in Iowa — Omaha — Ministrations by the way — The unhappy Winnebagoes — Yankton — Barbarities of soldiers and savages — Indian warfare — Native eloquence — Interviews and councils — Praying for rain — Peace mission of no avail — Returns to St. Louis — Travels abroad.

St. Louis University, Feb. 23, 1864.[1]

Very Reverend Father-General:

I WILL add a few lines to my long letter (journey of 1863) to inform your Paternity that no definite decision relative to my renewing my missionary work among the Indians in May has yet been reached. When I was in Washington the Secretary of the Interior and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs seemed very desirous that I should repeat my visit to the Sioux this spring, and even offered to pay my traveling expenses. It is going to be very difficult to obtain peace with those terrible savages. I have not compromised nor engaged myself in any way with those high officials.

My health is returning gradually. Meanwhile I have written to two Sioux interpreters, trusty men, raised among those tribes, to consult them and obtain information regarding the present state of the Sioux country with respect to the war, as to the disposition of the Indians in regard to peace, and whether my presence among them could be of any use, to either the Indians or the whites, in the capacity of peacemaker. I am waiting for the interpreters' reply; if it is favorable and my health permits, and above all under the wise direction and with the permission of the Reverend Father Provincial, I propose to visit those warlike tribes in the course of the coming summer. My only object would be to announce to them the word of the Lord, with the words of peace, and to put an end, by wholesome advice, to the massacres of the whites and thereby prevent the entire extinction of the Sioux nation, which must be the final result of this unfortunate and cruel war.

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[1] The four letters next following are from the personal letter-books of Father De Smet, the first three being translations from the French.

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In union of your holy sacrifices and prayers I have the honor to be, with the most profound respect.

St. Louis University, March 14, 1864.

My very dear Silvie:

I cannot express to you the joy and consolation that your good letters have brought me. They are the first I have received from the family, and I am exceedingly grateful to you. I am glad to see that your uncle Francis and dear Paul have received mine of December 24th. I do not get any answer; I know not to what I must attribute the delay; I own to you that the delay pains me deeply. * * *

I cannot hide from you, dear Silvie, that my health has been wavering for some months past, and begins to be threatening. I am broken down with all sorts of troubles: I suffer particularly with my head; it is seldom that I can leave my room. In case my health should permit, I will have to make an effort to take the road again, to undertake a very long and dangerous journey among the Indian tribes. In the present difficult circumstances, the Indians being in a state of war, the Secretary of the Interior begs me to go and visit them in the capacity of peacemaker, etc. The interests of our missions, the security of the whites in that country and the happiness and tranquillity of the Indians, all seem to require that I should go. I speak of this because I feel that it would be a very sensible affliction to me to have to start out again on a long and uncertain road to the Great Desert without having first received late letters from your uncle Francis, dear Paul, etc.

St. Louis University, March 15, 1864.

My dear Gustave:

I have received your two dear good letters of the 11th of January and 11th of February. * * *

Since my return to St. Louis after my long and painful journey I have been in rather bad shape. Like a regular old man, I am full of infirmities — my head especially troubles me the most. I can seldom leave my room and go out of the house. For some time past my greatest privation is to be unable even to celebrate holy mass. It is the first time since I was ordained priest in 1827 that I have been prevented by sickness from celebrating at the altar. I can see that the doctors are not without some uneasiness on the score of my health. As for myself I am not without hope; for that matter, we are in the Lord's hands; may he do with us according to his holy will. I am conscious of a wish to be able to renew and continue my missions and travels among the Indian tribes of the great plains. They have great need of being visited and of receiving good advice. For the last two years they have been making merciless war upon the whites, pushed to the limit of endurance by the injustices and provocations of the latter. Three to four thousand soldiers are on the point of leaving St. Louis to subjugate the warlike tribes, and annihilate them if they can. The Government desires me to go thither as pacificator, and I will do so gladly if in any way my health allows it. As the old Flemish proverb says: "When the legs creak the heart is good." The steamboat for the upper Missouri is to leave about the middle of next month, etc.

St. Louis University, March 30, 1864.

Reverend and dear Father Murphy:

This, to be sure, is rather waiting too long, to write to your Reverence. I will try no excuse; yourself must have made it already. Immediately at my arrival in St. Louis toward the end of the year, I found the ledger and day-book gaping and calling for a closing. In order to appear decently before his Paternal eyes it took me about a month hard labor, cyphering and corresponding all the while, with the brethren scattered far and wide among the Osages and Potawatomies, in Illinois, in Wisconsin, in Ohio, Kentucky and Missouri. Next came my correspondence with Europe which required immediate attention. I wrote a letter of twenty-four pages, on my last journey and mission among the Indians, to Reverend Father-General, according to promise and as requested. I wrote another of twenty-six pages to my near and dear friends in Belgium, who believed that I was dead and buried and I wanted to undeceive them by a long rigmarole of facts and dates. And then came Father Terwecoren, anxious to have some chaff and mixture to feed his *Précis Historiques,* and I gave him thirty-two pages. You see, dear Father, I have not been idle; and all the time I was sickly, * * * so I have been pretty much kept within doors; and thanks, after all, to these little miseries, being kept in, I was allowed and able to put out and let loose my flying sheets, under the wings of steam, by land and by sea. I hope my poor and little narrations will reach their various destinations and will obtain some prayers and some means, for the poor and destitute Indians and their poor and zealous missionaries.

I am now occupied in buying goods for the upper missions, to the amount of about $3,000. I am allowed to draw for $1,400 on Father Congiato and shall have to look out and make an effort for the balance. And then comes my eight days' retreat, after which I am much panting. And should my health permit, I am next to enter again on another long and dangerous trip. I have been even requested, by the Commissioner of the Indian Department at Washington, to undertake the journey and to bring about, if possible, a peace among the hostile Sioux, acting in concert with the general of the troops and the appointed agents.[3] They offer to pay all my expenses, with a handsome remuneration for myself. Not being well as yet I have not accepted of their request. I fear I would lose all caste among the Indians. They have hitherto looked upon me as the bearer to them of the word of the Great Spirit and have universally been kind and attentive on all occasions and wherever I have met them. Should I present myself in their midst as the bearer of the word of the Big Chief of the Big Knives in Washington, no longer their Great Father, but now their greatest and bitterest enemy, it would place me in rather an awkward situation. I have written to the Commissioner, that if I can go, I will go on my own hook, without pay or remuneration; visit the friendly Sioux first, and in their company try to penetrate among their fighting brethren and do my utmost to preach peace and good will to them, and to make them come to a good understanding with the general in command and the agents of Government. It may be a month or somewhat longer before I shall be able to leave. Should I go, I am fully aware of the great dangers I may meet with; but will be assured, at the same time, to be remembered in your holy sacrifices and prayers.

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[3] See p. 833.

On board the *Yellowstone*, Yankton city, capital of the Dakota Territory, 1,093 miles from the mouth of the Missouri, May 17, 1864.[a]

A day of fine weather gives me an opportunity to send you a report of the progress that we are making, and of my new journey of 1864. The water is low, and we are continually hindered by sandbars. We have barely advanced six miles in the last eight days. I spend my leisure hours in reading and in taking notes upon the Missouri, its numerous tributaries and the immense region of 500,000 square miles which it drains. I examine, I draw upon my own fund of experience, I question the best-informed travelers, and then I write. I feel confident of being able to give you a pretty exact idea of this great and interesting portion of the vast American continent. First let me say a word of my departure from St. Louis.

On the 16th of April the steamer *Yellowstone* left the port of St. Louis. I left on the night of the 20th, by the Northwestern railroad, hoping to outstrip the boat and meet it at St. Joseph. I even ventured as far as Leavenworth, in the company of our Reverend Father Provincial, to present my respectful homage to Monseigneur Miège, S. J., vicar apostolic for Kansas, and to our dear brethren in Jesus Christ. Upon my arrival, I learned, to my great surprise, that the *Yellowstone* was fifteen hours before me and making good time, favored by a heavy rise in the river and a good moon. I therefore found myself under the hard necessity of taking a carriage and starting after the boat, on the right [left] bank, up hill and down, on a drive of 200 miles. I will give a sketch of the aspect of this country, the greater portion of which is embodied in the State of Iowa.

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[a] This and the following letter are translated from the third Belgian edition, volume V. To whom written not stated, but probably to the editor of the *Précis Historiques*.

I had traversed this same country in 1838, when I was going for the first time among the Potawatomies at Council Bluffs, with Father Verreydt, to open our first Indian mission. All that region, then in its primitive condition, was in peaceable possession of the Indians; it was a grazing ground for the numerous herds of wild animals that ranged it. I shall always recall, with interest, the impression made on my mind by the first sight of these interminable plains and lovely prairies, enameled with flowers and plants that were perfectly unknown to me; surrounded by forests and fringes of woods, which seemed to frame them and the lines of which one could follow into the distance. The axe of the woodman had not yet penetrated thither. The whole face of the country, for hundreds of miles in length and breadth, from the Missouri to the Mississippi, has been changed, within the last twenty-five years, under the influence of civilization and the labor of an industrious people. One beholds with astonishment and admiration a succession of towns and villages in full prosperity, several of which already contain over 10,000 souls, like Leavenworth and St. Joseph. They are surrounded with vast and beautiful farms and immense pastures, where innumerable cattle are raised without trouble. Everywhere is heard the sound of the hammer on the anvil, and the puffing of steam in saw and gristmills. In all this region the soil is of extraordinary fertility.

I reached the city of Omaha on the 25th of April. This time, fortunately, I had gotten ahead of the steamboat. Monseigneur O'Gorman, the vicar apostolic for Nebraska, since May 8, 1859, received me with the greatest benevolence and the most paternal charity. I had time, until the 28th, to recover from my fatigues and to resume the religious practices prescribed by our rules. This important point requires a particular effort in an American stage, where nine or ten persons find themselves shut up, crowded and [illegible]queezed as in a small boat, and this for two days and a [illegible]ight. Presently I took farewell of Monseigneur the Bishop, and with his blessing received from His Grandeur all the necessary powers for exercising the holy ministry in his immense district, which embraces the Territories of Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana and a part of Dakota. I took the boat on the 28th of April.

As on former occasions, Mr. Charles Chouteau received me on board his boat with his habitual kindness and cordiality. He gave me the quietest and most commodious stateroom, and at once had an altar prepared therein. Thanks to his charity, I found myself installed as if at home in one of the Society's houses. I have the consolation of offering the holy sacrifice every day, in a kind of antechamber contiguous to mine. A good number of Catholics can assemble here, and they come every Sunday to assist at mass and fulfill their religious duties.

Among our travelers, who are some 150 in number, we have all the various shades of the Protestant sects, deists, atheists and believers in "elective affinities," who have broken all marriage and family ties. On a long-distance American steamboat, a priest therefore finds abundance of occupation. In the crowd he always finds some persons who respond to the Lord's grace, willingly receive instruction and are converted. One can awake better thoughts in most of them, and often remorse, which bears fruit later. When he first comes into the midst of such an assemblage, the priest is attentively observed: they seem to measure you from head to foot; it is like the curious beast in the menagerie, they stare at you with surprise, and are rather slow in approaching you. But the first reserve once broken, you are overwhelmed with questions concerning all the points of religion, some quite often sensible, but ordinarily they are outlandish, sometimes even rude and indelicate; this denotes a profound and deplorable ignorance, which inspires only pity and compassion.

From the 28th of April until this 17th of May, the boat has barely made 340 miles. It is constantly running aground on heaps of sand, which practically bar the river.

We are obliged to unload part of the cargo, to lighten the boat and permit it to cross, and this occasions great delays. These delays have given me opportunities to make excursions into the forests and prairies near the river, and practice my holy ministry. Here is the result.

In a point of woods called Oak Cove, in the Nebraska Territory, I found a Canadian who had been established there for eight years, and who was married after the fashion of the country, that is, by simple mutual consent, either before witnesses or a judge. His wife was a half-breed Blackfoot, and had received baptism in infancy, at the time of my first visit to her tribe. The first entrance of a priest at Oak Cove was a day of surprise and joy for the family. The father and mother were eager to have their four children baptized, and prepared at once to receive worthily the nuptial benediction.

Upon the opposite bank, in the Dakota Territory, I entered a cabin occupied by a young half-breed Yankton chief and his family. He recognized me and saluted me affectionately. I had baptized him upon one of my first visits to the Sioux. Later he had spent several years in our Indian school at St. Mary, among the Potawatomies. He presented to me his four sons, of whom the eldest was scarce six years old, and begged me to baptize them.

Along the banks and at some wooded points, I have regenerated in the holy waters of baptism eighteen children belonging to the nation of the Winnebagoes, a good part of which is Catholic. I will give a brief note of what I was able to learn concerning their sad and unfortunate condition.

Formerly they lived happy and contented near certain "branches" and lakes upon the upper Mississippi, where they occupied fine reservations. At the outbreak of the Sioux war in 1862, in which the Winnebagoes had taken no part, and in spite of their demonstrations of attachment to the whites, they were forced by the civil and military authorities to leave their peaceable abodes, their fair fields and gardens, and immediately their "reservation," which had been guaranteed them in perpetuity, was invaded by the whites.

The allotment made by the Government for the transportation of these poor unhappy banished folk was quite considerable, and there was abundance of provisions. Nothing was omitted from the large promises that were made them, "to manage everything for them, to make them happy and *comfortable* in their new home, where they would lack nothing." About 2,000 Winnebagoes submitted, forcibly, to this agreement. Last year (1863) they were put on board steamboats, which were chartered for the conveyance of these strange figures (*figures étranges*); and set ashore on their new reservation, situated below the Big Bend of the Missouri, 1,363 miles from its mouth and about 3,000 [300?] from their old dwelling-places. What preparations had been made to receive so many wretched beings, who saw themselves forced to leave their tents, cabins, fields, gardens, mills, fishing-grounds? They were given in exchange a portion of desert, comparatively uncultivated and miserable, destitute of animals and game, and besides this, they were set down in the vicinity of the Sioux, their mortal enemies from ancient times.

When they reached this place, the planting season was already too far along for favorable results. Last winter was long and severe. These savages were put on short rations. This spring they found themselves in addition without grain or seeds. A great number of their children have already died of destitution; for the most part, they have starved to death. To-day they are to be found scattered all over, in groups of two, three or four families, hiding upon the islands or along the shores of the Missouri. I was able to approach several of them, and, to their great joy, give baptism to eighteen of their little ones. Soldiers are stationed at different points along the river, to intercept them and take them back by force upon this "reservation" of desolation, where eighty of the poor wretches have succumbed already. It is one more link attached to the long chain of cruelties and injustice inflicted upon the unhappy natives. Some of the newspapers have made an outcry, asking: "Who is to blame for this barbarous conduct toward the Winnebagoes?" And the answer is "Who?" In fact, no light has yet been obtained upon this sad affair; but an investigation has been made. May this be for the sake of form? I will let you know the results, if any are ever made known.[4]

On the 11th of May, we found ourselves completely arrested by a sandbar a mile above Yankton, capital of the Territory of Dakota. This new town is still in its infancy. Its population consists of thirty or forty families. The capitol, the Governor's residence, and all the houses are made of logs and frame. Its situation upon the river, where the ground is high and sloping, is well chosen. Yankton will become a city of more and more importance, as the country settles up.

Just now we are fairly stuck. The water continues low, and the difficulty of loading and unloading has been so great, that the captain has resolved to have a large boat, of the kind called Mackinaw, built, which will carry seventy-five tons of freight, to lighten the steamboat.

The pioneer settlers are living here in a continual state of uneasiness, and are on the alert day and night. Though the Sioux are driven out of their ancient territory, far from the tombs where the ashes of their ancestors repose, bands of marauders still range their old domain, to rob and slay the invaders of their soil. Quite recently, six of the unhappy inhabitants have fallen at their hands. The paper of the 10th of May announces, on hearsay, no doubt, that our boat will meet great opposition on the part of 3,000 Sioux warriors, who are meditating an attack on Old Fort Clark, and resolved to dispute the passage of the river with boats that may try to go up. We can judge of the worth of this news in a few days. It is added that they are well armed; they have two cannon, abundance of powder and lead, firearms and arrows. We shall see. I put my trust in the Lord's providence and the protection of the holy Virgin Mary, our kind mother. I am sent out by obedience, and under the auspices of the Government, in the capacity of "messenger of the word of peace." Still, it is impossible to deceive one's self — this is a very critical moment; but *si Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos?*

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[4] This forcible expatriation of the Winnebagoes, and the absurd scheme adopted of sending them from Mankato down the St. Peter's to Fort Snelling, thence down the Mississippi to the Missouri, thence up the latter stream to their new reservation, a total distance around of 1,900 miles as against 300 miles overland, were public measures which, viewed from this distance, appear unjustifiable.

The situation is aggravated and peace rendered almost impossible by the recent occurrences which I have related in connection with the unhappy Winnebagoes, which have inflamed the hatred of the whites in every Indian heart; and also by the continual aggressions of our raw frontier soldiery, little habituated to military discipline, who abandon themselves to all sorts of cruel and shameful excesses. Two instances will show you what I mean.

Eight friendly Indians, riding at full speed, according to their custom, approached a troop of soldiers. The latter, not knowing the signal to stop them, called to them to halt. The Indians did not understand either the language or the order, and rode on. The soldiers fired on them and killed seven. The single one who escaped brought the news to his camp. The reprisals were terrible and barbarous. They took vengeance some time afterward, first by an attack upon a steamboat, in which four men were killed, and further by attacking a Mackinaw containing fifteen men, a young girl and a woman with two children, all of whom were massacred in the most frightful manner.

Here is another. Some soldiers, in a state of drunkenness, came to an Indian lodge in which several women were assembled. They grossly insulted the squaws, who tried to run to escape their brutality. Then they shot after them, and several of the poor creatures were struck and killed.

That is enough about the causes which are augmenting the present difficulties and accumulating them around us. The Lord alone can appease the wrath and calm the hearts of the savages, inflamed by the spirit of hatred and vengeance. Let us pray and hope in the divine mercy and the intercession of our kind Mother, *Refugium nostrum.*

I will finish this rather long letter with a characteristic anecdote, very suitable to the people of this region. On the 23d I found a Canadian, who had a cabin near the river and a woodyard for the service of the steamboats. He spoke to me of the great dangers to which his family was exposed, by the proximity of the Sioux and their hostile nocturnal visits. I tried to give him some salutary advice, suited to his position, such as he no doubt needed very much. I wound up by recommending to him "to keep himself always in readiness to receive the visit of the Lord; that he might come in the night when least looked for; that it would be most unfortunate to appear before his judge without being well prepared." Evidently he had not understood a thing of my little harangue, and was thinking only of Sioux. He answered, "Father, it is as you say; they come unexpected, these terrible Sioux, and without giving warning fill you full of bullets and arrows. As for me, I am not prepared at all, because I am poor; I have no powder nor balls to take my revenge. It is a sad situation, isn't it, Father? But to-day I have better luck. I have sold my wood to the boat; I will buy bullets and powder. Then let them come, these villains of Sioux, and they will find me ready to receive them." This is about the way all these rangers of the wood and plains talk to you. They have been raised in religion, but that is all. They do not practice it; they say to you "when I was young I served the mass; I made my first communion; but in this country, where I have spent the greater part of my life, I have forgotten everything." Moreover, by their continual contact with the Indians, they have become imbued with their manners and their superstitious ideas. But they can be brought back, little by little, by gentleness especially, and by recalling to them the great truths of religion concerning the end of man. Why have we not here two dozen zealous missionaries? Will Europe refuse them to us?

Fort Berthold, June 24, 1864.
(1,916 miles from St. Louis.)

On the 25th of May the boat stopped a moment at the Yankton Agency, to allow me to visit a poor sick woman and to confer the sacrament of baptism on two children. The same day it stopped at Fort Randall, where six children received the same benefit.

On the following day, while the boat was taking on its supply of wood for the day, I made my way into the forest. A rather roomy path brought me to a little hut not far from the river. The solitary inmate recognized me at the first glance and saluted me in the most affectionate manner. He was surprised but glad at the fortunate meeting. He called his Indian wife and they presented their children to me for baptism.

May 31st, the boat halted at Fort Sully, the old Fort Pierre, to discharge part of its cargo. This stop gave me several hours; I improved this time to take a little exercise, of which I had need after my long detention on the boat; I utilized it also for the good of souls. The half-breeds invited me to come to the principal cabin, and directly there came the mothers to have ten of their children regenerated in the holy waters of baptism.

The news of my arrival went out at once to two camps of Sioux Indians, the Kettles and the Yanktonnais; they observe a kind of neutrality, and hold more or less aloof from the hostile bands. The chiefs came to pray me to enter among them, saying "that the mothers had come out with their little ones, to put them under the special protection of the Great Spirit," that is to say, to receive baptism. They had gotten together and were squatting in a ring in the middle of the camp, in the open air. I gave them an instruction on the importance and necessity of baptism, and the principal dogmas of religion. They all appeared very attentive.

An Indian assemblage, come to listen to the word of God or to be present at any religious act, always behaves in the most respectful manner, which is really edifying to see. Watching them under these circumstances, one would imagine himself among Christians, rather than among unhappy pagans. Before the instruction, the chiefs keep saying to the priest, "Black-robe, give us strong words, because our hearts are so hard; we are ignorant as the animals on our plains; we need to hear thee. Speak; we are listening."

On the present occasion I distributed 164 images, bearing the names of the patron saints of the children baptized. I gave with each image a medal of the holy Virgin, to be borne about the neck as a token of their baptism. They keep these devotional objects with the greatest care.

The chief of the Yanktons, called Man Who Strikes the Ree, begged me most earnestly to obtain them an establishment for the instruction of their children. I promised that I would represent their distress and their good desires to the head chiefs of the Black-robes, that is, to the bishop and my superiors; I told them to hope, and to prepare themselves for this great favor by a good life, which would bring the blessings of the Great Spirit upon them. I then told them all about the Government's intentions in regard to them and the mournful consequences of war, and exhorted them to continue to keep the peace.

June 3d, as we went along, I espied sixteen lodges of Yanktonnais, grouped on a hill. They made us a signal to approach; we went to see them, and they invited us to a council, to deliberate upon the affairs of their country. They seemed irresolute, but hungry for news. We told them all about the trouble the tribes that had become hostile were going to get into, and exhorted them to keep quiet.

As we advanced farther into the hostile country, our crew had to be on the alert day and night, not to be surprised.

A word upon the habits of the Indians of these parts will not be out of place. Our regular troops are going to meet these wandering tribes of marauders, exasperated to the highest pitch against the whites. The Sioux are five or six thousand warriors in number, mounted for the most part on swift horses. War is to them not only a business or a pastime, but the occupation *par excellence* of their lives. The tactics followed by these Indians renders the regular system of warfare impotent or almost useless. They are here to-day and somewhere else to-morrow. All at once they are scattering panic among the horses and mules of the emigrants, who are crossing the desert in long caravans, and then they reappear once more on the Missouri river, waiting for the passage of boats to pillage them and massacre the feeble crews. The Indian has the gift of being everywhere without being anywhere. These savages assemble at the moment of battle, and scatter whenever the fortune of war is contrary to them. The Indian puts his wife and children in shelter in some retired place, far from the scene of hostilities. He has neither towns, forts nor magazines to defend, nor line of retreat to cover. He is embarrassed with neither baggage trains nor pack-horses. He goes into action when a favorable occasion is presented, and never risks himself without having the advantage of numbers and position on his side. The science of strategy is consequently of little use in operating against such a people. There is not on earth a nation more ambitious of military renown, nor that holds in higher estimation the conduct of a valiant warrior. No Indian could ever occupy a place in the councils of his tribe until he had met the enemy on the field of battle. He who reckons the most scalps is most highly considered among his people. The redskins are strangers to all care, they live without artificial wants, they are happy as kings, provided that in the course of their whirlwind vagabondage they can find buffalo and antelope. Every man among them is a warrior, and each has the conscious conviction of his personal valor.

As the boat advances, we perceive numerous traces of the passage of large herds of buffalo, along the shore. Between the 4th and 7th of June, without stepping off the boat, our hunters killed ten buffalo in the water and on the bank, besides six antelope, a deer, a hare and two wolves. They took three calves alive, that had got mired and were struggling to escape from the mud. It is easy to raise these calves.

On the 9th, the boat arrived at Fort Berthold,[8] 1,916 miles above the mouth of the Missouri. I stopped here to wait for news concerning the movements of the Sioux bands. I hastened to send them an express, to acquaint them with my arrival and intentions. I expect their response within a fortnight; if it is favorable, I shall, with the Lord's grace, do my best to go to them in the interior of the country.

The three united nations, the Grosventres, Aricaras and Mandans, received me with the utmost cordiality. They appeared to be delighted when I announced that I had come to spend some time in their village. On the following day, I collected the principal Mandans and Grosventres in one of their big lodges or earthen houses; they are about 150 feet around and can contain over 600 persons. I made known to them the motives of my visit, which were to announce to them the word of the Great Spirit, to baptize the little children, to penetrate, if possible, among their enemies, the Sioux; and to endeavor, in the name of the Great Spirit, to make them relish the words of peace of which I was the bearer from the President of the United States, Mr. Lincoln. I spoke for two hours, and they listened with the greatest attention and the liveliest interest. The chief, Manchoute, "Soaring War Eagle," (he is six feet six inches in height) addressed me in reply, in fitting and well-chosen words, accompanied by a really remarkable oratorical bearing and gestures. This facility in speaking seems to be natural to the Indians of the plains. In his long harangue, he thanked me particularly "for my good will or benevolence toward them," and expressed the hope "that my counsels and advice would be strictly followed and observed." In closing, he added: "I renew to-day the desire that I have already expressed for some years past: we are poor wretches and ignorant; we wish to know the way in which the Great Spirit orders us to walk on earth. Oh! let the Black-robes come and reside among us, to put us, with our wives and children, in the path of truth, and we shall live happy!"

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[8] Fort Berthold was built as a trading-post in 1845, but was occupied as a military post in 1864. It was the successor of Fort Clark, the old trading-post of the Mandan Indians. It was an important military post during the Sioux wars.

After the advice and the speeches, the Indian mothers came into the lodge with their babies, and placed themselves in a double and triple circle. What a consolation! Two hundred and four children were regenerated in the holy waters of baptism. Everything passed off in the best of order, though not altogether without noise. During the ceremonies, we were honored from time to time with a deafening chorus. All that was needed was for a young savage, seized with terror at the approach of the Black-robe, to exhibit the strength of his young lungs in piercing yells, to set all his comrades going in the same key. It was really enough to split one's ears. The dogs on the outside added to the uproar by reinforcing the cries of the children with their frightful howls and roars. But all in all, the 10th was for me a beautiful and consoling day. The religious ceremonies occupied it all. Through the constant bending of my somewhat obese body, to give the baptism, I was scarcely able to move for several days afterward, ***met het geschot in den rug:*** with a "crick" in my back.

On the 12th, I was invited by the Aricara chiefs. After smoking the calumet, I opened the council by announcing to them the motives of my coming. Just as among their brethren the Mandans and Grosventres, my words were listened to with religious attention, and approved. The head chief, Net-soo-taka, or White Parfleche, made me a long and handsome response, very much to the purpose. Then I had to listen to and condole with a succession of complaints of their enemies and the Government agents. The meeting lasted three hours, or thereabouts. Then the men left the lodge and gave place to the mothers and their babies. I took my place in the middle of the lodge, seated on a buffalo-skin, and all the small children, to the number of 103, were presented to me by twos to receive baptism.

On the 13th we had an alarm in the camp. A band of Sioux were perceived in the neighborhood. After having killed a Grosventre, wounded an Aricara and stolen some horses, they gained the open and escaped pursuit.

I will add a circumstance which has contributed considerably to increase the Indian's respect for our holy religion. Last year, in consequence of an excessive drought, the harvest had been very meagre; they had hardly got enough for this year's seeding. Hoping for better results this time, these poor people had worked hard and put in something like a thousand acres. All their farm implements were a few mattocks and poor spades, with crooked or pointed sticks and shoulder-blades of buffaloes. After preparing this land in this manner, they had sowed it. Unluckily, this year again the spring had been without rain or even dew. Corn and other vegetables were not growing and their hope of a good crop was fast vanishing again. The Indians were feeling very bad about it. At the meeting on the 12th, they begged me to implore the aid of heaven to obtain them an abundant rain, that would fertilize their lands. "Black-robe," they said, "you who have such power, can you not also make a little rain come?" I answered them that I had not that power, that the Grea

Spirit alone is omnipotent; but that anything can be obtained from him by prayer. I exhorted them to have recourse to him, who is always ready to listen to humble and well-disposed hearts, since he says to us himself, "Ask and ye shall receive." I said further, "Let us implore heaven together, and offer our hearts to God. I will say the greatest of prayers (the mass). Let us hope in the infinite mercy of the Great Spirit, who is our Father; he sends help and grants protection to his children on earth, when they try to make themselves worthy." I offered to God the propitiatory victim. The next day, the 13th, the sky clouded up for the first time in a long while, and a gentle and abundant rain fell at intervals for about twenty-four hours. This fortunate circumstance filled all hearts with respect for the word of God, and at the same time with hope and joy. On the 17th we applied to heaven again, and the Lord granted us a second rain, which did much good. These favors from on high made a deep impression on these simple-minded Indians.

They attended willingly, and with great assiduity, at all the instructions. A large number of adults, together with all the old men and old widows, the sick and the blind, prepared to receive baptism worthily. I find them really admirably disposed, and already the chiefs have taken it upon themselves to devise a remedy for the pagan vices and superstitions which have hitherto desolated the three tribes.

I shall never forget the assistance so generously furnished me at the time of my arrival at the fort by the worthy Mr. Gerard, in charge of the establishment; Mr. Pierre Garreau, the interpreter; Mr. Gustave Cagnat, clerk, and all the employees. I shall not cease to make vows for their welfare. May the Lord repay them a hundredfold for their kindness and thoughtful charity toward me.

I made an allusion to the eloquence of our Indian orators. This is the textual translation of the address of Little Walker, a Mandan chief, to the President of the United States:

"Great Father, I am desired to send you a word. What can I say? Once we were a powerful nation. What are we to-day? Ask your agent; he visits us every year — he knows our number, and he will say 'Alas! there are not many Mandans left.' What has become of them? What part of the earth do they occupy? Great Father, look over the prairie, when it is covered with grass and dotted with beautiful flowers of all colors, pleasant to the sight and the smell. Throw a burning torch into this vast prairie, and then look at it, and remember the life and happiness that reigned there before the fire. Then you will have an image of my nation. My great ancient village was like this lovely prairie; my people was this rich growth of grass; our women and children were the flowers. The smallpox was the torch that set fire to and destroyed our fair gardens, of which, alas! only the memory remains to us.— But we have buried the spirit of hatred and vengeance. We no longer reproach the white man for having thrown the burning torch in our midst.

"Death has thinned our ranks. Today three different peoples form only a single village. When the Aricaras and Grosventres are hungry and suffering, we share it with them. I have heard the speeches that our allies have made. I have thought it my duty to add my feeble voice, hoping that you will take pity on us and protect us against the attacks of our enemies.— Stretch out your powerful arm, and it will form a barrier so strong that the Sioux will not try to pass; and we shall sleep at peace, without bows and arrows at our side.— Assuredly, the strong and powerful will not hear in vain the weeping and sighing of the weak, who call on him for succor; especially when the weak can attribute to the strong all his troubles and the decadence of his nation."

This language of Little Walker is not without eloquence. How say you?

*On July 8th another formidable party of Sioux warriors, to the number of 200 or 300, presented themselves before Berthold on the opposite bank of the river Missouri. It was clearly a risk to cross over to their side. Contrary to the advice of all the whites in the fort I went to meet them. They received me with unmistakable tokens of friendship and respect. They had repaired to the spot for the express purpose of having a conference with me. The council lasted nearly three hours. The great chiefs spoke favorably with regard to peace, and heard with pleasure and satisfaction the words I addressed to them on the part of the Government. Our interview concluded in the most favorable manner.

During my stay at Berthold I received tidings of the great tribe of the Santee Sioux who had the chief hand in massacring the inhabitants of the State of Minnesota in 1862. They reckoned, on that occasion, above 700 hapless victims, most of them children, women and old men. Their present abode is on the English frontier, on the north. I was assured that they too would be glad to see me and hear the announcements I was authorized to make on the part of the Government. Before setting out to them I wished to consult the general of the army, which was 5,000 men strong, and inform myself of his dispositions toward the savages. So I descended the Missouri and at a distance of about 200 miles I found the great camp of the whites. I gave the general an account of my mission and of my different interviews with the Sioux. He told me plainly that circumstances obliged him to punish by force of arms all the Sioux tribes that harbored in their camps any murderers of white men. "Unfortunately," he added, "all the Indian camps harbor some of these desperate ruffians, over whom the chiefs have little or no power."

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* Fragment found loose in one of the letter-books without date or other means of identification, but evidently relating to the subject of Father De Smet's expedition in 1864, referred to in the preceding letter.

In consequence of the general's declaration and the circumstances of the case, my errand of peace, though sanctioned by the Government, became bootless and could only serve to place me in a false position: namely, that of being face to face with the Indians without being able to do them the least service. So I took the resolution of returning to St. Louis. I reported to the Government all that had passed during my stay in the plains.

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At the post of Berthold there are three tribes united in one large village, numbering about 3,000 souls. The Minnetarees, or Grosventres, the Aricaras and the Mandans. They welcomed me with the greatest cordiality. They seemed enraptured when I told them that I was going to spend some time in their village.

The day after my arrival I gathered together all the principal chiefs or braves in one of their great lodges or clay houses, which are from 100 to 200 feet in circumference and will hold more than 600 people. I acquainted them with the reasons of my coming, viz: first to preach to them the word of the Great Spirit; second, to administer baptism to all children who had not yet received it; third, to introduce myself, if possible, among their enemies the Sioux, and endeavor, in the name of the Great Spirit, to make them relish the words of peace, of which I was the bearer on the part of the President of the United States. My address lasted two hours.

Letter to Father Imoda,
near Sun river, August 6, 1865.

You, no doubt desire to know what I have been at for these —— months. Here is a little synopsis of it which you will please communicate to Father Giorda and to the other

Fathers: On the 20th of April, 1864, I left St. Louis for the upper country on a mission from the Government, to endeavor to obtain a peace with the whites among the Sioux. Owing to various circumstances the object of my mission failed. The Indians I met felt pretty well disposed, at least as to appearances, but the military authorities thought it could not be granted without the Indians surrendering all the murderers of Minnesota of 1862, which was altogether impracticable, or rather impossible. I spent the greater portion of the summer (1864) among various Sioux bands, among the Aricaras, the Mandans and the Minnetarees or Grosventres of the Missouri. I had the great consolation to baptize over 700 of their little children and a great number of adults, chiefly old men and women in extreme old age, and persons in danger of death by sickness. I was several times in great danger on the part of the Sioux; even a plot was laid, on one occasion, to murder me and my band of whites, had not kind Providence interfered. A chief recognized me and attributed to me the deliverance of his daughter, a captive among the Crows. At the earnest request of the chieftain, I had offered the holy sacrifice of the mass for her return. She made a miraculous escape from her enemies, though pursued by a large band of young warriors, and succeeded in reaching her father in safety after a six days' flight with very little repose.

If the thing be possible and the times allow of it, one or two missions will be established — one among the well-disposed Sioux, and one for the three above-named tribes. At the end of August, 1864, I returned to St. Louis. I proceeded to Washington in the beginning of September, to give an account of my visit among the Indians to the Government. Having no written authorization to show, either from Father Giorda or Grassi, I could effect nothing with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs — An authority should be sent to me in proper order and if possible signed by the Governor of the Territory, who acts as Superintendent over the Indians. Whilst in Washington I was not a little surprised to see, from a letter to Father Van Gorp from San Francisco, how unwelcome and uncharitably the poor sisters had been received by F. C. The thing is unaccountable to me. I wrote to his Reverence on the subject. I have not received an answer. I would like to hear some explanation given on the subject, in the interest of the missions, and would thank Father Kuppens for it, being at that time on the spot. I now rejoice that, notwithstanding the endeavor to the contrary of F. C., the good sisters have reached the mountains.

Toward the end of September I was back in St. Louis. The Father Provincial had received meanwhile, a letter from the Father-General with a permit and invitation for me to come over to Europe. I left New York on the 20th of October and arrived in Rome on the 9th of November. The next day I had the great consolation to assist at the solemn beatification of blessed Canisius. I saw his Holiness different times and shall ever remember his paternal kindness. In December I returned to Belgium; visited different cities; visited Holland, the Duchy of Luxembourg, England and Ireland. I met with proper success everywhere. On the 7th of last June I embarked in Liverpool with four candidates from Holland, five from Belgium and three from England, besides four sisters of Ste. Marie from Namur. We had a prosperous and happy sea voyage. We landed in New York on the 19th of June — left New York on the 26th and arrived in St. Louis on the 30th, safe and sound with all my companions, who are now in their pious avocations in the novitiate.

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Mr. Charles Chouteau, the great benefactor of the missions, has sold out his whole concern in the trading posts on the Missouri river, except at Fort Benton. He may even sell that post before long. This would bring a great contrariety in regard to the upper missions, as freight on all the goods might be exacted, which would make a considerable amount. However, let us hope in kind Providence. Should Chouteau cease running on the Missouri, some other kind friend might step in his footsteps. I shall try my best. Remember your benefactors in your holy sacrifices and prayers and do not forget me.

Remember me to all the good Fathers and Brothers, particularly to the Reverend Father Giorda, to whom I shall soon write. Should this letter reach your Reverence you will please communicate to him and to Father Grassi its full contents.

CHAPTER IV.

OCEAN AND RIVER VOYAGES OF 1865 AND 1866.

Bringing recruits to America — A dash through England — Neptune still on duty — Whales and icebergs — War news — Embarrassing reception at home — Up the river again — Description of boat and crew — Occupations of travelers — Scenery and natural history — A buffalo farce — Damage by high water — Violence of current — Prepared for battle — Sufferings and wrongs of friendly Indians.

Ostende, June 2, 1865.[1]

AT six o'clock this evening, I leave anew my native country, my family, my friends; my benefactors, my brothers in religion. Adieu, adieu to all — and who knows? it may be forever, until the supreme reunion in heaven.

This separation — why should I not own it? gives me no small heartache; but I hope to be able to work yet a little for the glory of God and the salvation of souls; this is the supernatural magnet which draws me so far away from dear Belgium and the affection that I have found here. I always miss something when I am not among my good Indians; notwithstanding the kindly welcome that I meet everywhere, for the sake of my apostolic mission, I am conscious of a certain void wherever I go, until I come again to my dear Rocky Mountains. Then calm comes back to me; then only am I happy. *Hæc requies mea.* You will readily understand: after having passed a good share of my life among the Indians, it is among them that I desire to finish the few years that are left me still; it is among them also, if it be the will of God, that I desire to die. Ah! this would be my last and greatest happiness on earth.

Before going on board the steamship which is to transport me from Ostende to London, I wish to thank once more my countrymen who have been so kind to me, and

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[1] From the French of the third Belgian edition.

PORTRAIT OF FATHER DE SMET, SHOWING THE LEOPOLD DECORATION.

in especial my benefactors. I thank God, my journey in Europe has been blessed; I leave content, and go home happy. All the persons who have taken an interest in my mission will learn with pleasure that I am taking with me thirteen young men and one of our Fathers. They are going to devote themselves to the great work of civilization by means of the gospel, the only one that is possible, as I have satisfied myself in many places in well nigh forty-five years of continual missionary labor. Together with these companions, I am taking to America four Sisters of Saint Mary, of those whose mother-house is at Namur. You will observe that the mission to the Rocky Mountains is in some sort a Belgian work, like that of Calcutta.

On Wednesday, the 7th of this month, with the grace of God, we shall embark at liverpool for New York, on the steamer *City of New York*. We hope to arrive for the feast of Saint Louis Gonsaguez.

Now I have only to request your prayers and masses for a fortunate voyage. This will be the ninth time that I have crossed the great ocean, under the protection of heaven, with an entire and filial confidence in the Star of the Sea, *Stella maris*, the kind Mother of us all. I shall pray for all the persons with whom I have come in contact, and will have the Indians pray for them. May we, some day, meet again in paradise! On earth, everything is vanity, nothing entirely satisfies the heart; I have had many opportunities of convincing myself of this, having traveled and talked with men of all religions, all opinions and all classes of society: believers, that is, children of the Church, are the happiest; and it is among them also that those are found who make others happy; they have not their personal interests in view, but act out of pure devotion and charity.

Adieu! I shall continue to send you accounts of my travels. The journal of the present voyage begins to-day with our departure from Ostende.

Instead of waiting to send it from New York, if kind Providence should permit us to reach that place, I will add to this letter a curious little matter that I have found in my notes. It is the Indian tradition of the rainbow. It will be seen that the biblical truths find traditional confirmations in all places, even among savages who live in countries the most remote from all communication. How, after so many proofs of our holy and so consoling religion, can so many remain incredulous? That is what I have never been able to understand, nor shall I ever.

University of St. Louis, Aug. 24, 1865.[a]

I have been back in St. Louis since the end of June. Pressure of work and the little indispositions that have disabled me since my arrival, have delayed the sending of this letter.

Agreeably to the promise I made you upon leaving Brussels, I will give you a little sketch of my voyage, although there is nothing especially interesting to tell. It was quiet and fortunate, which is saying a good deal in a few words.

I left Tronchiennes and Ghent, with my dear traveling companions, on the 2d of June. Toward six in the evening, we embarked at Ostende and took our farewell of Monsieur Albert Montens, my dear brother-in-law Charles Van Mossevelde, of Termonde, and the other friends who had accompanied us to the landing place. We had serene and beautiful weather for our passage of the channel.

The next day, about eight in the evening, we landed at St. Catherine's quay in London. Father MacCann and a young Jesuit, not a priest, were awaiting us with several carriages. It took us nearly an hour to cross this quarter of the great modern Babylon and reach the Liverpool station. Toward noon an express train took us away. We went very fast. We had little time to contemplate the rich and beautiful fields, the numerous cities, the big towns and villages; all disappeared like a flash. Toward six in the

[a] From the French of the third Belgian edition.

evening we arrived at our destination and took lodging at the Queen's Hotel. We had been almost fasting since we left Ostende. You can easily imagine that we did honor to the great roast of beef and other dishes that passed rapidly under our hands.

The good Fathers of Liverpool were most fraternally thoughtful of us and overwhelmed us with tokens of friendship, goodness and charity.

On the 7th, we took leave of them. Reverend Father Weld, the Provincial, and several other Fathers conducted us on board the fine new vessel, the *City of New York*. About five in the afternoon the anchor was weighed and we left the harbor. I had taken the precaution to engage our seventeen places two weeks beforehand. The first night out, the engine got out of order and the boat stopped for several hours. During the forenoon of the next day, we cast anchor in the port of Queenstown, in Ireland, to take on passengers and the mails. The number was then complete; it approached 450. All the nations of Europe and America were represented.

Our crossing may be reckoned among the most fortunate ever made; no tempest, no accident, only three of my companions and three of the sisters were called upon by the inexorable Neptune, and were forced to submit to pay him tribute. Each of them had to show him his or her pale face, and make gestures and grimaces which sometimes caused a good deal of mirth.

We saw a great many whales, some of them very near. They passed majestically near the sides of the vessel and projected two columns of foam from their nostrils. Other large sea-fish also showed themselves very numerously.

For several days the air was very keen and chilly. All made haste to get out their winter coats. This was not strange; we were gradually approaching the floating masses of ice, detached from the glacial pole. Several in fact came within reach of our curious gaze. It was the first time that most of the passengers had enjoyed this marvelous sight;

so they opened their eyes wide and could not tire of contemplating these transparent isles, until finally they disappeared in the distance. One of these mountains of ice had the appearance of an immense amphitheatre, seen at the distance of a quarter of a league.

Every day some sailing vessels and steamships were signaled. The direct route between Liverpool and New York is very much frequented. In case of a meeting the national flag is hoisted on both ships, and the pilot continues to keep his eye on the compass, not deviating by a mark from his course. Only on signals of distress do they approach and communicate.

We had several days of fog in the vicinity of the banks of Newfoundland, where codfishing is carried on on a large scale. It is a noted region for mist and rain. I do not remember to have passed there once, in all my various crossings of the Atlantic, in calm and serene weather. As long as the fog lasts, day and night, the great steam whistle of the boat is blown every five minutes, to avoid collisions.

Early on the morning of the 19th we came in sight of Sandy Hook. The American pilot had come aboard the night before, with his package of newspapers. On stepping on deck he found himself besieged by a crowd of curious people, eager to learn the great recent happenings in the United States. The journals were devoured and discussed with ardor, for we had amongst us many politicians of the old and new hemispheres, and a large number of merchants.

I learned with consolation that the sad and unhappy American war was drawing to its close, that quiet was returning among the masses, and that law and order, despite the abolition of slavery, seemed to be returning little by little in the States where secession had caused so many misfortunes and ruins. The spontaneity of spirit of the people of the South, which precipitated so large a number of States into the rebellion, caused likewise at the North a general rally to the Union. To-day, no one in the South seems to think any longer of undertakings hostile to the Government. The majority of the Southerners ask nothing but a fair chance and the means of lifting themselves up once more. A true policy must tend to assure a solid peace and durable prosperity. It is to be hoped that President Johnson will remove from his side the vengeful agitators, and then the return to the Union will render this land more beautiful, prosperous and great than it has ever been. But the more violent and widespread the fire, the longer time will it take to extinguish it. The American torment has been disastrous in its effects; but the wisdom of the people will avail to heal it in the end, at least we must hope so.

On the 19th, toward nine in the morning, the *City of New York* entered the vast harbor of the great American metropolis, which contains to-day more than 1,100,000 inhabitants. What strikes the stranger first on his arrival in New York, is the splendor of the public establishments, of the great hotels and houses; her commerce and prosperity, her luxury and extravagance. The war has been a gold mine to the city; the great contracts have made it wealthy in the last four years.

On the day of our arrival, we dined at St. Francis Xavier's College. Our Fathers received us with the most perfect cordiality and the most fraternal charity. Their establishment is very prosperous and contains about 500 pupils. It is very popular. The city government, the members of which are for the most part Protestants, granted it in the course of the year a subsidy of $4,000.

My companions needed exercise; they took it by ranging the city and its environs, and visiting the most interesting public buildings. I had my missionary affairs to think of. I obtained free entry for all our boxes and trunks. The chief of the custom-house, to whom I presented myself with a good recommendation, was extremely civil to me.

In the morning of the 26th, we took the railroad at Jersey City, by way of Cincinnati, where we tarried eight hours to visit our dear brethren of St. Xavier's College. Finally we reached St. Louis on the 29th of June. It was the feast of Saints Peter and Paul. We were in time to attend the solemn distribution of prizes which took place that day at our university. I was truly delighted to be at the end of my long travels, with all my companions, safe and sound. I was moved to the bottom of my heart at finding myself among my dear brothers in Jesus Christ. I went at once to join them in the hall where the exercises were taking place. There was a great audience present to hear the addresses of the pupils and witness the giving of the prizes. To my great surprise and confusion, my return was saluted by them with clapping of hands and stamping of feet. I will admit that at this moment I was far from being at my ease.

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A word in regard to the Indians, and I am done. My ailments and the lateness of the season prevent me from visiting my dear Indians this year. The war against the Indians in the plains of the Missouri and its tributaries is being pushed to the utmost. Congress lately made an inquiry into the barbarous conduct of Colonel Chivington, accused of having ordered the massacre by his soldiers of 600 Cheyenne Indians, women, children and old men, without the slightest provocation on their part. The poor wretches had come to the fort to renew their professions of friendship to the whites.

To-day's papers announce to us the circular of General Conner, commanding the expedition against the tribes of the Yellowstone river and its tributaries, in which he outlines the policy to be pursued toward the Indians. The general enjoins upon his troops to pursue these unfortunates without rest, never stopping to parley with them and never leaving their trail before coming up with and chastising them. "They must be severely punished to begin with," he says; "then we will see whether, by good behavior, they show themselves worthy to escape complete extermination." Always the same atrocious policy. The cruelties committed upon the redskins will inevitably bring about reprisals, and the promised extermination will likewise follow inevitably. I hope to see these poor tribes again soon.

Reverend and Dear Father:[3]

Your most dear letter of the 27th of March last, with the beautiful and fraternal note of the venerable Father Tranqueville, have reached me safely. They come to surprise and console me amid the mournful and savage wilderness in which I find myself at present, the desolation of which seems still more sombre and terrible by reason of the war of vengeance and retaliation which has been raging with fury between the whites and the Indians for the past four years. I have just received your good letters, at this great distance from St. Louis, by the mail-post, or express. They will be to me an encouragement and a consolation, in my long and dangerous mission and excursion among the nomadic tribes of this vast region. I hasten to reply, with the most sincere gratitude, taking advantage also of the present occasion to commend myself, as well as the conversion of all the Indian tribes, in a most special manner, to your holy sacrifices and your good prayers.[4]

[3] Written in French and dated on board the steamer *Ontario* at Fort Benton, Mont., June 10, 1866. To whom addressed not stated. From the Linton Album, p. 82 *et seq.*

[4] Passport from General Sherman to Father De Smet:

Headquarters Military Division of the Mississippi,
St. Louis, Mo., April 9, 1866.

All officers of the Army within this Military Division are required, and all citizens are requested to extend to the bearer of this letter, the Reverend Father De Smet, a Catholic Priest who has heretofore traveled much among the Rocky Mountains and is now en route for missions under his control, all the assistance and protection they can to enable him to fulfill his benevolent and humane purposes.

He has always been noted for his strict fidelity to the interests of our Government, for indefatigable industry and an enthusiastic love for the Indians under his charge.

W. T. SHERMAN,
Maj.-Gen.

You ask me to send you some word from time to time, and to keep you informed in regard to the occurrences of such a journey, and go into minute details upon the sort of life that one leads upon a long-distance steamboat in the "Far West."

I shall endeavor to satisfy you. First as to the boat, on board of which I am. The steamer *Ontario* has a single wheel at the stern. It was built in 1863, carries 450 tons or 900,000 pounds, avoirdupois, draws thirty inches of water light, and has three boilers, which consume eighteen to twenty cords of wood daily. A cord of wood is eight feet in length by four in height and four in depth, and sells on the Missouri for $4 to $8 per cord.

The *Ontario* has two engines of 132 horse-power, and is already considered as past its prime. The constant service in which boats are kept on our great rivers of the West, where commerce and transportation are very considerable and much varied, uses them up in a very few years. They have to contend with impetuous currents, to ascend rapids, to cross banks or bars of sand or mud, where the full power of the capstan has to be exerted to get them over. Snags, or forest trees which drop into the current by thousands from the crumbling banks, and whose roots become imbedded in the bottom of the stream, often form dangerous and formidable barriers or obstacles, upon which a great number of steamers are wrecked or seriously damaged every year.

Going against the current, the *Ontario* makes five to six miles an hour; with the current, fifteen to eighteen miles. Her crew consists of a captain, two clerks, two pilots and an assistant, two engineers, two mates, a steward, two watchmen, one head cook and two assistants, one *hotellier* [barkeeper?], seven cabin boys, a porter or baggage man, eight deckhands (white), four firemen, nineteen negroes for all the work of the boat, and one chambermaid.[5]

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[5] This is one of the most complete descriptions of the Missouri river steamboat extant.

The main cabin of the *Ontario* consists of thirty staterooms, seven feet long by six wide, and with two berths each. There are thirty-two first class passengers, fifteen gentlemen, twelve ladies and five children. In the matter of religion, there are among these some ten Catholics, Protestants of diverse shadings, freethinkers or infidels and a few Jews. All this mixture is wafted in peace over the American waters. It is for the priest to make himself "all things to all men," to win them to Jesus Christ, according to the beautiful maxim of the apostle. I say mass in my stateroom, where I have scarce room to turn about at the "*Dominus vobiscum*" and the "*Orate fratres.*" Sundays and feast days I leave the door open, and the Catholics come to attend the divine service, outside, on the gangway; each time I have had the consolation of seeing several children of the Church devoutly approach the holy table. I often have an opportunity to discuss one or other point of our holy religion with my traveling companions, who never weary of asking me questions, and I invariably find them upright, attentive and respectful.

One Protestant lady has been regenerated in the holy waters of baptism, and I venture to hope that several others will have the good fortune to follow her example, for their fidelity to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the Lord's grace.

The long days are passed in social conversations, sometimes political, sometimes scientific or religious. Storytellers or jokers are never lacking in an assemblage of American travelers. Some read, others play at cards or dice, or perhaps checkers or other games of chance, the names of which are unknown to me. Evenings, we amuse ourselves by proposing charades — somebody imitates some animal or other, as the antelope or buffalo, or suggests some word or question, and the audience guesses. But the principal amusement, in the main cabin, appears to be dancing to the sound of music, and on moonlight nights there are concerts out on deck, with mirth and refreshments.

The Missouri, or Muddy river, has an ordinary width of one to three miles; its length, up to the Three Forks, is nearly 3,300 [2,546] miles. It goes winding down this long course and often changes its channel, thus rendering very watchful and expert pilots necessary, who judge the depth of water by the appearance of the surface, and in spots where the water spreads out over a wide expanse they have recourse to the lead.

In the season of high water, in spring, the Missouri has generally two great rises. The first begins with the melting of the snows on the immense plains of the West. Then the numerous tributary streams discharge their superabundance of water into the mother river, which gathers them all into its vast bed. The second rise comes down from the Rocky Mountains and their subordinate chains, the chief of which in the upper country are the Black Hills, the Bell Mountains, the Little Rocky Mountains, the Bear Paw Range, the Coteau of the Prairies, etc. All these masses of water united often form an impetuous and irresistible torrent, which cuts away whole fields from one side and forms sand-banks and bars on the other. The water filters and penetrates into, and saps the base even of the high hills and bluffs that line the river, which crumble beneath their weight and often drop down to the river surface, or disappear entirely in its bed. These bluffs and hills, cut in half, are very numerous and remarkable, and reveal to the geologist all the different layers of which they are formed, to a height of more than a hundred feet.

When the boat stops to cut and load wood, which takes ordinarily one to two hours, some passengers busy themselves fishing or hunting, while the greater number go walking over the adjacent hills or through the forests along the river, making bouquets of the flowers of the wilderness or picking up shells and petrifactions of various varieties. Geologists and amateurs of natural science examine the diverse formations and layers of the soil. I will give you a little general notice of our observations, which may perhaps interest you.

From Independence to Fort Leavenworth, a distance of sixty-five miles, the river passes between a long series of bluffs and hills, belonging to the tertiary system of rocks. From the city of Omaha to Benton, the bluffs and hills have an elevation of about 156 feet; they are based upon erratic layers of rocks of varying dimensions, containing little shells rounded by the water, up to rocks of several thousand pounds thickness [weight?].* The following layer is a coarse-grained tufa, often covered with plates or leaves of some laminated metal; this is followed by a layer of fine-grained tufa, mingled with mica. This tufa-like stone is quite soft, and contains slight layers of gypsum, which disappear in the neighborhood of Heart river. As we proceed, we observe everywhere layers of yellowish or grayish limestone, often topped with blue clay, which contain petrifactions (Lymnea) of various species. Other layers consist of argillaceous sands intermingled with a great quantity of oxide of iron, in the form of brownish or reddish balls of different sizes; layers of lignites, one to seven feet in thickness, extend for a distance of about a thousand miles. Farther on we find in abundance deposits entirely made up of petrified woods. This long series of bluffs and hills, as far as the Bad Lands, are often crowned with erratic blocks of stone of varying dimensions; heaps of petrified shells abound in several places, to the very hill-tops.

In regard to our little hunts. Our hunters, without going any great distance from the boat, killed a great number of antelope; this is the quickest and most graceful animal of the plains. The stratagems employed by the hunter arouse its curiosity. He walks, runs, crawls on all fours, lies down, shakes from time to time his handkerchief on the end of his ramrod; the antelope, drawn by his natural curiosity, stops, approaches in short springs, looks, stares, and at last receives the fatal shot. The flesh is fine and delicate. Herds of buffalo are very numerous this year, especially in the neighborhood of the Bad Lands. It is the daily bread of the Indian tribes in the upper plains. The various tables of the *Ontario* are well supplied at present with the exquisite meat of this noble animal. Yesterday (June 2d) we were all spectators of a striking scene, in which buffalo alone were the actors. The theatre was the most wonderfully wild and picturesque part of this region. Mountainous hills rise here to a height of 500 to 1,000 feet. They are wholly sterile, stony, adorned here and there with a few dark and solitary pines, while their smiling valleys are covered with flowers and herbage, and thousands of buffalo were cropping the tender grass as we approached.

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* French *épaisseur*.

As soon as they got wind of man's proximity and heard the noise of the steamer, they rushed precipitately to the nearest bluffs, whose slopes were fully 60° with the horizontal, and by pushing on and climbing stoutly in zigzag lines, they gained the summit. The dark, living, winding lines, the columns of dust that followed them, from the bottom to the top, and the noise of their tread and their dull bellowing, furnished the spectators a most charming and imposing spectacle, and moreover a revelation concerning the agility, muscular strength and capacity for endurance of this mighty animal of the American desert.

But the buffalo had not yet showed all their accomplishments; as in all spectacles a farce is usually the closing piece, so here three old buffalo bulls gave us one after their kind. The spot chosen was an almost vertical hill (something like 75° slope, and nearly a thousand feet in height). The bulls found themselves just about in the middle of the slope; it was hard to see how they could have got there. At the approach of the boat they made prodigious efforts to clamber up and gain the top. All eyes were fixed upon them; our cheers were a powerful encouragement to high speed. One reached the goal, and received the applause of the spectators; his two companions strained their best, but still they slipped down; and beginning to slide with their enormous weight, they rolled head over heels, and by a long series of bumps and pirouettes, at a height of 400 or 500 feet, they came tumbling into the river within a few yards of the boat. The entire descent was accomplished in less than a minute. We supposed they were killed; but not the least in the world — to our great astonishment and admiration they rose to the surface and, snorting, blew the water from their nostrils. Their life was granted them — for the reason that our larder was well stocked. We saw them both reach shore, shake the water from their shaggy heads and necks, and each triumphantly hoisting his standard (his tail), they disappeared at full gallop.

In all the Bad Lands region, for a stretch of about a hundred miles, bands of bighorn are very numerous. The bighorn has a body like a deer, but his head resembles that of the goat, surmounted with an enormous pair of short, heavy horns. He haunts the inaccessible peaks and the wildest and least frequented valleys, climbing with ease and celerity almost perpendicular cliffs, jumping from rock to rock and grazing on the tender grass that he finds among them. The flesh, when the animal is fat, is more tender, succulent and delicious than that of any other animal. In its habits the bighorn resembles very much the chamois of Switzerland, and it is hunted in the same manner. They go in flocks, and when they have grazed they seek the most remote spot on the mountain and repose among the rocks.

This sterile region is the wonder of all travelers. Lovers of geology and nature will some day come to visit it to observe its strange marvels. In their way, I will venture to say that the Bad Lands are the most remarkable place in the vast territory of the United States. Although uninhabitable to man, the buffalo range it in large bands, the bighorn inhabits it, and it is the resort of the bear and the rattlesnake, the antelope, the common and the black-tailed deer. In my description of the Missouri I have tried to give you a little general idea of everything that is to be seen. The boat is two days crossing the Bad Lands region. The varied views that it presents keep one in continual admiration, and it is impossible to leave it without regret.[7]

The ice of spring has caused much damage in the forests lining the Missouri. They bear in many places the imprint of desolation. Last February there was a general thaw. The abundant snow that was then covering all the upper plains with its white shroud, melted suddenly under the burning rays of the sun and the spring breezes. All this new water, freed from restraint, hastened then by the thousands of torrents and tributaries of the Missouri, into the great reservoir of that immense region, which drains and fertilizes one of the vastest and most beautiful valleys of America. Last winter was a very severe one, and had frozen the Missouri so solidly throughout that buffalo herds and camps of Indians, with their numerous herds of horses, crossed it without the least danger, as if on an iron bridge. Up to the time of this sudden thaw the ice had lost none of its thickness nor strength. It was broken up into numerous cakes by the great influx of water, which raised the river and converted it into a torrent. The freed Missouri rolled its tumultuous waters with noise and uproar, and formed here and there gorges and barriers of ice-cakes, one to two leagues in length and twenty to forty feet high, in the narrow places of the river. It overflowed in consequence, bearing its destroying icebergs, which in their furious course crushed all the smaller vegetation and uprooted the trees or stripped them of their bark, and changed these smiling valleys, with their thickets and forests, into arenas of desolation. They are now covered to a depth of one to three feet with sand and mud.

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[7] This is not, strictly speaking, a "bad land" district; that is, it is not of the character to which that term is usually applied. It is a place where the river has cut its way through a system of rocks which are soft enough to be readily worn by the action of the elements. They present a wonderful display of strange, picturesque, and curious forms.

At the Muscleshell a convoy of twenty-five wagons and over 100 horses had halted and was encamped for the night. An avalanche of water and ice, leaving the bed of the river, spread over the bottoms with such rapidity and impetuosity that the whole train was swallowed up; all the animals perished; only the men succeeded in gaining in haste a neighboring hill, and were able to save themselves. At Fort Union and many other points, houses on the bank of the river were carried away or destroyed. The work of destruction was already in progress before I left St. Louis. The breaking up of the ice destroyed a number of steamboats. The losses are estimated at over $1,000,000.

We left the port of St. Louis on the 9th of April last. From the outset the boat had to contend with the excessively high water, as I have mentioned in my letter, and with high west winds, which often made it impossible to proceed. The Missouri was bankfull and beginning to overflow into the forests and lower valleys. Consequently our progress was much retarded. In many places all the power of the boat's two engines was exerted, without being able to make head against the impetuosity of the current. Then we had recourse to the slow but resistless capstan, which succeeded each time in surmounting the obstacles. Once only the great cable broke, and we were carried a great distance down stream, not without danger.

"*Violenta non durant.*" The river fell as rapidly as its brief rise had been swift. Then another kind of obstacles were presented, in the numerous sandbars of which the river is full, which change its channel frequently and which the ablest pilots cannot always avoid. Under the holy providence of the Lord we have thus far escaped all the dangers of navigation. We have had only one serious alarm, a salutary warning of the fragility and uncertainty of all human works and the swiftness with which everything passes and disappears and the fairest hopes decay. Under a high head-wind and against an impetuous current, the boat became unmanageable, resisted the skill and the efforts of our excellent pilot, veered about and, driving rapidly down stream, struck violently upon a great hidden rock. The shock was great and caused a heavy leak. For a few moments the salvation of the *Ontario* was despaired of; she was filling rapidly. Several of the officers thought her lost and were for abandoning her, but others redoubled their efforts to repair the injury, and with the aid of all the pumps they kept her afloat, and she resumed her course. I have great confidence in the four lamps that burn night and day in the convents of St. Louis, before the statue of the Holy Virgin, our Good Mother, *stella nostra et refugium nostrum,* a confidence further strengthened by the prayers offered in Europe and America for the success of my long and dangerous excursion. In the course of our trip to Benton (3,100 miles) [2,285], we have passed thirteen boats that had ten to fifteen days' start of ours; permit me the expression, "A. M. D. G.;" we have been borne as if on angels' wings to the boat's destination. Under the puissant protection of the Queen of Heaven, and full of confidence in divine Providence, we hope that my mission will end happily and favorably, and that I shall return, safe and sound, among my dear brothers in Jesus Christ.

In the midst of this lonely wilderness, ranged over by numerous wandering tribes, made yet more barbarous and indomitable by the injustices and misdeeds of the whites; where ferocious animals and venomous reptiles,— the bear, the wolf and the serpent — resort and have their lairs; and despite the more agreeable spectacle of the numerous herds of buffalo, elk, deer, antelope and bighorn, which change the aspect and animate the sad monotony of these primitive verdure-clad plains, and come from time to time to refresh the spirit and the mind of the Christian traveler and add to his admiration and gratitude, to the providence of the Lord, who is so mighty in gifts and benefactions to his poor creatures here below — the "*Quam dulce,*" etc.,[8] often recurs to my thoughts in this region, but unmingled with regret and without the slightest uneasiness. Guided by the holy obedience, we are, everywhere, in the Lord's hands.

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[8] How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.

Upon entering the Sioux country, the *Ontario* was put in fighting trim. The pilot-house was planked over and made safe against bullets or arrows, the cannon was mounted in the bow, all the carbines, guns and pistols were inspected and loaded, and above all, sentinels were posted by night to keep guard against any surprise by the enemy. The preparations appeared formidable indeed. We saw once in a while war-parties of Indians, coming and going and keeping at a respectful distance from the boat, without the least hostile demonstration. All the way to Benton, I am glad to say, our fire-arms have served only to slay the timid animals of the desert, which were at once cut up for the kitchen and dinner table, always abundantly furnished throughout the voyage.

The feast of the Glorious Ascension was in truth a day of consolation for me. I said mass early in the morning; my little congregation was present, and all devoutly approached the holy table. Two hours later we were at Fort Sully. The arrival of a steamboat is always an event in such a locality, and on this occasion especially it made a good deal of commotion. The fort was surrounded by a neutral camp of Sioux, of some 200 lodges, and from the top of the great pole in the centre, dominating all the plain, the starry flag of the Union was proudly floating in the fresh breeze of this elevated region.[*] The day was most beautiful. I met at Fort Sully a large number of acquaintances — whites, half-breeds, Indians and negroes — and when we had shaken hands amicably, according to the usage of the country, and exchanged our little compliments and items of news, I accompanied the Indian chiefs to their camp. They were a mixture of various Sioux tribes — Yanktons, Yanktonnais, Brûlés, Ogallalas, Two-kettles, Santees and Sioux-

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[*] According to the observations of the scientist, Nicollet, Fort Sully has an elevation of 1,400 feet above the Gulf of Mexico.—*Author's Note.*

Blackfeet. We had a long talk, in the course of which all their miseries, sufferings and griefs came to light. They had just emerged (May 10th) from a long and severe winter; the new grass was barely beginning to show, or the leaves of the willows and cottonwoods that fringe the river to develop. For several months the Indians had subsisted on the flesh of their lean dogs and horses, together with a pittance of wild roots. A great mortality, especially of children, had brought desolation and mourning to most of the families; scarlet fever and other maladies were still continuing their devastation.

These Indians needed consolation — but good advice still more. In my quality of Black-robe I did my best to give them salutary counsels, as well as to console them. The grievances of the Indians against the whites are very numerous, and the vengeances which they on their side provoke are often most cruel and frightful. Nevertheless, one is compelled to admit that they are less guilty than the whites. Nine times out of ten, the provocations come from the latter — that is to say, from the scum of civilization, who bring to them the lowest and grossest vices, and none of the virtues, of civilized men.[10]

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Upon this visit to the Sioux, I spent the fair feast of the Ascension and the following day in giving them instruction in the various principal points of religion. They behaved with the greatest propriety and gave close attention to my words. Before my departure they brought me with eagerness their little children, to the number of over 200. I had the consolation and happiness of regenerating them in the holy waters of baptism. Having scarlet fever in their camp, I spoke to them of the necessity and urgency of baptism, and of the eternal happiness of the children who might fall victims to the disease. They gave evidence of most lively gratitude for this.

[10] For omitted portion of letter, see p. 1200.

For several years past the Yankton Sioux have been urgently asking for missionaries; and the Government agent, on the occasion of my visit, joined them in requesting a Catholic mission, under the direction of the Fathers of the Company of Jesus, for them. The Yanktons are many and have sufficient resources to provide for the support of their children. It is to be hoped that the superiors will take this important matter under consideration; the salvation of thousands of souls depends upon it. The Dakota or Sioux nation consists of a great number of tribes, forming together a population of 35,000 to 40,000 souls.

The Sioux at Fort Rice received me in the most friendly manner. The boat only stopped for an instant, consequently my talk with them was but short. I meant to visit this post on my return from Benton. There are a large number of Canadian and Creole Catholics there, who receive the visit of a priest once a year.

At Forts Berthold and Sully sickness has carried off a majority of the children of tender years. Fortunately the greater part had received baptism at the time of my last visit. They rejoiced at my presence, and hastened to bring me all the newly born of the three tribes, the Grosventres, the Aricaras and the Mandans, begging me to grant them the holy sacrament of regeneration. During the rigors of last winter, the famine and misery were so great among them, that some fifty persons died of starvation. I will have more to say later of the situation of these unfortunate tribes.

At Fort Union I baptized all the babies of the post and a great number of Assiniboin children, who were there just then. Here too the mortality had been equally great, but a large number had had the happiness of receiving baptism at the time of my last visit.

On our way we saw several large camps of Crows and Blackfeet, amounting to some thousands, in various valleys, on both banks of the river. Despite their pressing invitations, the *Ontario* did not slacken speed. All their demonstrations were peaceable and friendly, and all the passengers returned their brotherly salutations.

Finally, on the 7th of June, after a voyage of fifty-seven days, I reached Benton, safe and sound, with all my belongings. I immediately made all arrangements for the transportation of the goods, to the different missions east of the Rocky Mountains. I have not had the consolation of meeting our Fathers of the Mission of St. Peter. A fresh and furious war has broken out between the whites and the Blackfeet, in which again the whites have given the first provocation, and our Fathers have been obliged to withdraw for the moment. In another letter I will give you some particulars of this war and some information as to the astonishing progress of the two Territories, Montana and Idaho. My visit to Benton has not been in vain. I have baptized seven adults and several children.

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CHAPTER V.

EXPEDITION OF 1867 TO THE HOSTILE SIOUX

Another Government mission to the hostiles — Injustices of the whites — Reprisals of the Indians — Across Illinois and Iowa — Arrested by floods — Tribute to the Irish — To Sioux City under difficulties — Piety of a Yankton Indian — The shifty Missouri — Through wild Dakota on horseback — Many baptisms — Council with chiefs — Indian life a hard one — They ask justice — Hurricane and flood — Joins Government commissioners — Major De Smet — Work among soldiers — Various councils — Bitter complaints of the Indians — What can be done for them — Return to St. Louis in state of exhaustion.

I[1] SHALL be on the road within a week. The object is as follows: The Secretary of the Interior requests me to accept the mission of envoy extraordinary to the hostile Indian tribes, to endeavor to bring them back to peace and submission and to prevent as much as possible the destruction of property and murder of the whites. There is a very formidable coalition of Indian tribes which seems from recent information to be growing from day to day. Among the hostile tribes are the Cheyennes, Arapahos, Sans-arcs, Hunkpapas, Blackfeet, Bloods, Brûlés and a great many Sioux tribes. They are able to put a number of thousand warriors on foot and they make war on the whites wherever they can find them.

As you see, I have a very large and difficult task, and all that encourages me is the prayers that accompany me. I have accepted the Government's commission, there being nothing contrary to my duties as a missionary, and with the distinct understanding that I shall not accept any remuneration for my personal services. I prefer to be altogether independent in money matters and my only object is to be of use to the whites and still more to the poor Indians. They are for the most part the victims of the misdeeds of the whites. I do not hesitate to say that the depredations of the Indians are in general the result of incessant provocations and injustice on the part of the whites. When the savages raise the hatchet or go on the war-path, it is because they are pushed to the limit of endurance, and then the blows that they deal are hard, cruel and terrible. That is their nature.

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[1] Extract from letter in French to his brother Francis, March 29, 1867.

I[2] have a little leisure here at Sioux City and I will make use of it to send you a few words. I shall also make an effort during my long and dangerous mission to keep you informed from time to time in regard to what I see and what happens to me, whether good or bad, among the Indian tribes of the plains whom I propose to visit, if they will let me. Will they receive me among them? While all hatchets are raised against the whites, while hundreds of scalps dangle and flutter in token of triumph from the tips of their lances and are used for decorations for the warriors and their ponies? Eagle feathers are in great demand among the Indians at present and their bonnets and their horses' manes and tails are covered with them — each plume denoting a scalp taken from the enemy.

More than ever the fearful Sassakwi, the Indian war-cry, resounds throughout the great desert. The Government asks me to go thither in the capacity of envoy extraordinary. My superiors approve my nomination, and I am on the road to endeavor to accomplish my arduous mission, which is simply one of charity, in behalf of the whites and in the interest of the Indians themselves, who are threatened with total annihilation unless they can be brought back to submission and peace. In time of war the most terrible and atrocious cruelties are practiced by the savages; all their passions are let loose and they abandon themselves wholly to the spirit of vengeance against the whites for all wrongs and injustices their race has suffered. It is always true that if the savages sin against the whites it is because the whites have greatly sinned against them.

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[2] To Terwecoren, April 30, 1867; from the French.

I enter into these sad details and reflections to give you a faint idea of my position and especially that I may gain a share in your pious remembrances, and in those of my dear and worthy brethren and acquaintances. The firm conviction that I am accompanied by many fervent prayers is a most sweet consolation to me and a great encouragement. Conscious of my own nothingness, I place myself confidently in the hands of the holy providence of the Lord and under the protection of our illustrious and good Mother, the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Pray that I may render myself worthy of these powerful aids and I shall have nothing to fear. *"Si Deus pro nobis quis contra nos?"*

I will begin by tracing the route that I have followed in coming from St. Louis to Sioux City. You can easily follow me on the map of America. On the 12th of April last at three o'clock in the afternoon, I left St. Louis for Chicago, the principal city of Illinois, 280 miles away. This city, which I have seen born, already contains upwards of 200,000 inhabitants and is on the highway to prosperity. Our Fathers have built a fine large Gothic church there and established a school which contains nearly 1,600 pupils. Between St. Louis and Chicago there are fifty-three stations, big and little, of which Alton and Springfield are the chief. The railroad passes through a succession of rich and beautiful prairies and plains, diversified here and there by vast forests and thousands of farms, with their innumerable herds of cattle, sheep and horses. All this country is flat rather than rolling and the journey is made in fourteen to fifteen hours.

I left Chicago at half-past eight in the morning on the 13th by the Northwestern railroad for Omaha, capital of the State of Nebraska, at a distance of some 500 miles.

The road crosses the State of Iowa from east to west. Some forty stations appear, some of which are considerable towns. The soil is generally very fertile and more rolling than that of the State of Illinois.

On arriving at Boonesboro, 158 miles from our destination, we learned that the sudden melting of the snows had swollen all the streams and transformed them into rushing torrents. All the bridges had been carried away and all the bottom-lands flooded for a width of one to three miles. Though in great haste to get ahead, there was nothing for me to do but to have patience and make a virtue of necessity.

I found a good number of Irish Catholics at Boonesboro, who rejoiced in my misfortune in hopes of hearing mass the next day, which was Palm Sunday. They seldom receive a visit from a priest — three or four times at most in the course of the year. They have built a little frame church, consisting simply of four walls and a roof. The interior has neither chairs nor benches nor an altar nor even a cross or image. A little platform was put up in haste for the offering of the holy sacrifice. In spite of the rain which came down in floods a large number assembled to attend mass and instruction, and several approached the holy table with much fervor and piety.

I spent three days among these good Catholics. They showed me the greatest attention and overwhelmed me with kindness and charity. Wherever a priest has the good fortune to find a son of St. Patrick he is sure to find a sincere friend and benefactor ready to do for him whatever he may need. Wherever in America ten Irish families find themselves settled, no matter how great their poverty or distress, they erect a little temple to the Lord, in hopes that before long a priest will come to see them and settle among them. I will venture to say that three-fourths of the Catholic churches, orphan asylums and charitable institutions in the United States have been built by the zeal and gifts of the good Irish. The long and cruel persecution of our holy religion in Ireland by *la perfide Albion* has been, under the holy providence of the Lord, the surest and most efficacious means to render the Church more illustrious and to propagate it more rapidly in all the regions whither the zealous cohort of apostles and fervent disciples of St. Patrick have gone to escape English tyranny. I will add that of all European countries it is persecuted Ireland, so oppressed and despised by her cruel tyrants and the enemies of religion, that furnishes America, Australia, the Indies and other places their most illustrious bishops and most zealous apostles. To-day the whole world calls for them.

On the 16th of April the railroad took us ninety miles farther to the little village of Denison. For the rest of the way to Omaha, sixty-eight miles, the railroad was for the present rendered impracticable by a continued series of washouts and other breaks caused by the flood. There was a single little tavern at Denison to which the greater part of the travelers went, though it could not properly accommodate half its guests. All rules fail in dry weather, says the proverb, and in these circumstances the travelers were put away three and four in a bed. For my part, as a very special favor, I had the happiness of spending the night alone on a fine bag of straw in a little kind of den without even a window.

On Good Friday, after being detained three days, the water having somewhat abated, five travelers joined me in hiring a wagon to take us to Sioux City, some hundred miles northwest of Denison. We got away late in the afternoon, and after making fifteen miles found shelter for the night at a solitary farm, six miles from the nearest neighbor.

On Saturday we reached the crossing of the Little Sioux river after a ride of forty-two miles. We passed the night in a little tavern kept by an honest Bavarian Catholic, who had not had the happiness of assisting at mass in several years. Judge of his consolation when he learned that I was a priest, and that he and all his family would on the morrow have an occasion to discharge their Paschal duty, and that the holy sacrifice of the altar would be offered to their intention. He treated me with the utmost kindness and benevolence and showed great thankfulness for the spiritual benefactions received for the first time in his house on the great day of Easter.

We crossed the Little Sioux in a small skiff or rather ferry. The bottoms were still flooded for a good mile in width. We rented another wagon to take us to Correctionville, which has yet but a single dwelling, that of a good old Irishman, his wife and six children. This place is twenty-two miles from the Little Sioux. We spent a good night here. The family was eager for instruction and all my conversation with them was upon various religious points. The father of the family already had in mind the erection of a church at Correctionville as soon as ten or so of his countrymen shall have settled there.

April 22d, the Irishman brought us to Sioux City, twenty-seven miles, in his wagon. All the intervening distance consists of rolling elevated plains, with a fertile soil, rich in grasses, where innumerable herds of domestic animals would find ample pasturage. Deer and elk still range here in good numbers. All this region resembles an agitated sea, suddenly become motionless. Day after day, it is always the same monotony. You go up and down an interminable succession of larger or smaller hills and valleys, like terrestrial billows. A fringe of timber can be seen along the streams and in some deep valleys and ravines in the higher portions.

In summer this region is an ocean of verdure, adorned with flowers, always agreeable to the eye. In autumn fires run over it and cover the whole surface with the sad black tint of mourning. Then comes winter and extends its shroud over all nature. At present winter is just drawing to a close in these parts. The snow is melting and disappearing rapidly. In severe seasons it lies two to four feet deep over all the country. Numerous drifts and patches still appear, icy and sparkling here and there on the blackened hillsides.

After we left Denison, we passed two little towns in the first fifty miles; in the second half of the distance only a few small farms. The winter is rigorous in upper Iowa and will keep back colonization for some time to come. Dubuque, on the Mississippi, is the principal town of the State. There are four churches there with a bishop and Catholic charitable institutions.

Reaching Sioux City I took up my lodging with the young curate of the place, Reverend J. Curtis. He practices the holy ministry here with the greatest zeal and edification. He enjoys the highest consideration among Protestants as well as Catholics. He is a pupil of the great Irish seminary All-Hallows, which every year sends its young, fervent apostles, filled with virtues and talents, to the various parts of the globe where the bishops may have called for their aid. In the twenty-five years that this seminary has been in existence, over 300 pupils have been sent out to foreign missions.

Sioux City has a little Catholic congregation of about fifty families; the greater part are Irish, the rest Germans or French. Mr. Curtis' mission extends 130 miles north of the Missouri river, and he ministers to more than 200 families scattered over this distance. The number grows each year.

The good chief Pananniapapi, with a band of twenty-eight Yanktons, has just arrived in Sioux City. We are hourly expecting a steamboat which is to take us all together to his country. He is on his way home from Washington where he has been at the summons of the Secretary of the Interior to transact some business for his tribe.

In my interview with him he told me with his natural simplicity that a young chief of his tribe and a near relative, who had gone east with him, had been attacked with a vomiting of blood during their stay in the capital, which soon brought him to great weakness, so that they lost all hope of his recovery. In that extreme and afflicting situation Pananniapapi had recourse to prayer and implored the aid of heaven. Then he drew near to the bed of the dying man, and being filled with faith, exhorted him to put all his confidence in the Great Spirit, and showing him the cross of the Savior, which he had about him, he offered it to the sick man's lips, saying "Dear nephew, embrace the crucifix with confidence. The image of Christ reminds us of the Son of God who descended from heaven and came upon earth to redeem us and deliver us from hell at the price of his own precious blood. Jesus Christ can do everything. He will give you health and bring you back safe and sound to the bosom of your family." He embraced the cross with a pious ardor and full of faith. The spitting of blood then ceased, and from that day his strength gradually returned to him. "I hope," said the good chief, "that the healing of my nephew will help to bring all my tribe to the knowledge, service and love of the Great Spirit. I am happy to meet you, Black-robe, and to learn that you are coming to visit once more the Yanktons and the other tribes of my nation (Sioux). We shall have all we can wish for, if you can stay among us."

They tell me that the steamboat on which I am to embark, with Pananniapapi and his band, is in sight. I must make haste and pack up my little effects and close my traveling bag. The distance I have yet to go on the Missouri river is 260 miles. I propose to remain a few days in the territory of the Yanktons, and thence to penetrate into the interior of the country in search of the Sioux tribes.

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[8]As I announced in my letter from Sioux City, I embarked on the 30th of April [1867] upon the steamer *Guidon*. The boat was crowded with passengers and merchandise for the new Territories of Montana and Idaho. It was

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[8] To Father Terwecoren. Written at the Yankton agency, May 15, 1867.

No. 15 of the immense fleet of steamboats that were going this year to Benton, a distance of 3,160 miles.

At the great melting of the snows which cover with their white shroud our vast plains and the Black Hills, the Missouri river and its numerous tributaries overflow, flooding all the alluvial bottom-lands. This spring rise never lasts long. When we embarked the river was already going down — the most critical and difficult moment for navigation. During high water all the different channels become filled with mud and sand and thus raise and level the bed of the river through all its width. As the water subsides new channels are formed little by little. At that time the great obstacles for steamboats, aside from the high winds of the West which prevail in the spring, are the numerous bars or sand-banks. Often hours or whole days are required to cross one or two.[4]

Above Sioux City we noticed a recent cut-off where the impetuous Missouri when bank-full had forced a passage through an immense forest of large cottonwoods a mile in extent and had scoured out a deep channel. It was only a matter of a few hours. This passage shortens the river fifteen miles. The *Guidon* was among the first to try it, always on the lookout for the threatening snags with which this new stretch of the river is studded. Without any other incidents than the bars, snags and winds, the boat took six days in going from Sioux City to the Yankton reservation, a distance of 260 miles.

The head chief, Pananniapapi, and his traveling companions were received with open arms by their families and friends after three months of absence. I too shared, in my capacity of Black-robe, in their friendly demonstrations. They were all delighted to see us again in such good health.

I took up my lodging in the house of the excellent interpreter of the nation, Mr. Alexis Giou, who loaded me with kindness and friendliness. He put me in possession of a nice little closet or attic, the only place available, where my altar, bed and all my things were straightway arranged, and in a few minutes I found myself in a real little *chez moi*, glad and happy to have escaped from the noise and tumult of the boat.

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[4] This observation upon the habits of the Missouri river is literally correct. The most experienced pilot could not have stated the case more exactly.

I went to work the next day, while awaiting the arrival of the steamboat *Bighorn*, which had on board my provisions and necessary outfit, for my long journey across the plains. Every day I have had the consolation of saying mass, instructing the Indians and baptizing the little children that they brought me, the number of whom already amounts to 200. The Yanktons are scattered over their reservation for a distance of thirty miles. The spring rains and winds often render travel by land quite difficult.

I learn that the *Bighorn*, which left St. Louis on the 12th of April, will be here to-morrow; so I wait. The leaves of the cottonwoods along the river are coming out rapidly; the grass on the plains is visibly shooting up and promises abundance for the wild animals and for travelers or beasts; everything seems to call me to be going.

I have given the chief Pananniapapi the beautiful interesting letter of Sister Louise Regiers, written at the request of the worthy Ladies of the Poor Churches. The chief asks me to thank those respectable ladies in his name for their great kindness toward him and especially for the good prayers that they offer to heaven in his behalf. He greatly admired the little images they sent him, which he distributed among the different lodges or families of his tribe.

Fort Buford, at the mouth of the Yellowstone, 2,240
miles above St. Louis, July 8, 1867.[5]

I suppose my letters of April 30th and May 15th have reached you. In the first, I gave you my itinerary from

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[5] From the French of the third Belgian edition, volume VI.

St. Louis to Sioux City, and thence to the Yankton agency, near Fort Randall. At the agency, I had the consolation of regenerating in the holy waters of baptism more than 200 little children and some adults. Several of them are already enjoying eternal bliss. Happy innocents! They seemed to be awaiting my arrival, to go and take their places in the celestial habitation, among the angels and saints of the Lord.

The Yankton interpreter, Mr. Alexis Giou, gave me, during my sojourn among his tribe, a small apartment in his frame cottage. In this hospitable asylum I passed many happy moments; especially, I had the happiness of offering there every day the holy sacrifice of the mass. The two Sundays that I was among the Yanktons, a chapel was improvised, where Catholics and Protestants, whites, half-breeds and Indians, gathered to attend divine services. All showered attentions and regards upon me.

May 17th. The steamboat *Bighorn,* thirty-three days out from St. Louis, arrived at the Yankton agency, and landed in good order my wagon, my little traveling necessities, my two mules and my saddle horse. These three animals, on coming ashore after so long an imprisonment, performed capers without end. The attractive perfume of the fresh grass caused them a delirium of joy; they threw themselves down with all four feet in the air, rolled right and left on the sod, jumped and skipped, and carried on at such a rate that they were near playing the mischief with the spectators, assembled to admire their leaps and exploits. Still, these four-legged humorists did not forget the matter of refreshments; in a short time each was going around with a rounded paunch, looking like a bag of hay.

The captain of the steamboat deserves thanks for the care he had taken of my animals. Despite his watchfulness, however, the horse on one occasion got loose from his halter and managed to get off the boat, while it was in motion, and tranquilly went for a swim. His escape was not discovered for an hour afterward. At once the boat was turned back down the river, in search of my courser, and he was found safe and sound at the foot of a bluff too steep for him to climb; otherwise he would have got to the woods and that would have been the last of him. The deckhands brought him on board again.

Three days were required to bring our quadrupeds into tractable shape. One of the mules showed himself nothing less than bull-headed, and revolted whenever the bridle was passed over his long ears. After several attempts, all of them fruitless, the driver, to punish the balky animal and get a little respite himself, left him the bridle, but took away the bit; the mule appeared satisfied and the driver had no further need to resort to the whip to keep him quiet.

May 21st. I left the Yankton agency, together with the good chief Pananniapapi and his band. My little caravan was composed of a Sioux interpreter, a guide, a horse herder and a hunter. For seven miles, the route lay across an elevated country, through lovely smiling prairies, slightly rolling. Then we came down on the bottom-lands, the valley proper of the Missouri. There the Yankton chief called Iron Horn and his little band have some cultivated fields. I gave baptism to all the little children. Six miles farther on, at the *Sentier de bois à proue,* [Prow-wood Landing?] I baptized several others. We had much difficulty in crossing the muddy stream opposite Fort Randall: all the baggage had to be carried to the farther bank on men's shoulders; all arms were required to help the two mules and the horse pull the empty wagon out of the sticky mud. Three miles farther, on the bank of the Missouri and on the land of the chief Magaska, or Swan, we camped for the night, at a distance of seventeen miles from our starting-point.

May 22d. I regenerated in the holy waters of baptism a half-breed family, father, mother and seven children, who had prepared themselves several years before to obtain this favor. The parents received the sacrament of marriage, according to the Roman ritual. Seventy-four children of

Magaska's band also received baptism. All the morning was taken up in these holy ceremonies. We left the camp toward noon and regained the uplands. Several showers of rain made the road muddy and slippery. After traveling eight miles, we set up our tent on the bank of Louison creek, with a flowing current and clear as crystal. To the traveler fresh from the turbid water of the Missouri, the sight and contrast are very agreeable.

At this place a solitary hostelry, consisting of two wooden shanties, had been erected and was inhabited by a Canadian, his half-breed wife and several of their children. All seemed happy to see me. Several other Canadians, who support themselves by cutting wood along the river to sell to steamboats, having been notified of my presence, had brought their children to meet me. All my hours, until late in the evening, were spent in instructions, for which these men seem hungry; they pay earnest attention to them. Ten children were presented to me for baptism, and a half-breed woman received, with the holy waters of baptism, the nuptial benediction.

May 23d. About ten in the morning I left the banks of the Louison, resuming our march by green and rolling roads. A spring shower brought agreeable freshness to the atmosphere. After a stretch of nineteen miles, we set up our tent on the bank of Pratt creek, alongside the Hamilton hostelry. The proprietor of the latter was an old acquaintance of mine, so he showed me many kindnesses. He put all the products of his farm at my disposition; his henhouse furnished us the necessary eggs to make a pretty good dinner on the following day, which was a Friday. There was a gathering at Hamilton's, like that at his neighbor's on Louison creek; they were waiting for me to confer baptism on two adults and thirteen little children. It was a goodly offering to make to God, on the eve of Our Lady the Auxiliatrice and the feast-day of the martyr of the Society of Jesus, the blessed Andrew Bobola.

May 24th. I offered the holy sacrifice of the mass early in the morning. After doing honor to our host's eggs, we resumed our march to make twenty-two miles. The road crosses immense and beautiful plateaus, which present innumerable parterres, where, at this agreeable season of the year, the lovely little daisy abounds; it is really the queen of this country. It appears in all its splendor, in the most vivid and most varied colors; it ranges from snow white to purple, red, blue and the deepest yellow.

We came to Bijou toward three in the afternoon, and camped near a clear cold spring. These very high hills serve as landmarks in these parts; they can be seen for thirty miles away. Everywhere in these elevated plains you come upon numerous natural basins or reservoirs, which really deserve to be called lakes, being three to six miles in extent. They fill up every spring, at the time of the melting of the snow and during the rainy seasons. Ducks, wild geese, snipe and other aquatic birds abound; they make their nests in the reeds and tall grass.

We passed by several large prairie-dog villages. Their inhabitants live underground and seem to live in harmony with the owl, the prairie hawk and the rattlesnake. At the approach of the hunter, they are sometimes seen to enter the same hole all together. Formerly, these fair plains supported numerous herds of buffalo, elk and deer; to-day, since the military road has crossed them, the large animals have disappeared. We saw in the distance a few antelope, and along the road a great number of snipe, prairie-chickens, wild pigeons and a variety of small birds.

The Sioux chief of the Brûlé tribe, Katanka-Wakan, or Ghost Bull, joined us on the road, and we camped together at the foot of the hills at Bijou. Here a Canadian pioneer has built his cabin. I baptized his five little children.

May 25th. The night was cold; water froze in my tent. We left the hills at Bijou at six in the morning and resumed our journey. We crossed another series of plateaus, parterres of variegated flowers and slightly rolling prairies, where ponds of water are frequent. These usually evaporate during the great heats of summer. Toward noon, we halted on the shore of Red lake. We had snipe and wild pigeons for dinner. We met a solitary family of the Brûlé tribe. I conferred baptism on five of their children. All along the road, we noticed a great many birds of different species. Our tent was set up on the banks of American creek.

May 26th. I celebrated the holy sacrifice of the mass early in the morning, having thirty miles to cover. We started betimes; the surface of the country was the same as on the two previous days. As we rode, and without leaving the trail, a hunter killed fifteen pigeons and several snipe. We crossed four small streams, the Crow, Prickly Ash, Elm and Box Elder, and arrived at Fort Thompson about seven in the evening. There we set up our tent, at a short distance from the Missouri. I made my call on the officers of the fort, and we spent a very agreeable evening. The officers of the American army are, in general, *gentlemen* in the full force of the word. They showed me the utmost cordiality and provided for all my wants.

May 27th. I found upward of 120 lodges of Indians in the vicinity of Fort Thompson, belonging principally to the tribes of Brûlés, Two Kettles and Yanktonnais. The object of my mission from the Government had already been announced to them; they received me with affability and confidence. I convoked the principal chiefs and the braves in council. As the names they bore may interest you, by reason of their singularity, I will give a few of them; besides, they are my spiritual children and my friends: I take pleasure in making you acquainted with them. They are Mazoéâté, or Iron Nation; Istamanza, or Iron Eyes; Tawâgoekeza-numpa, or Two Lances; Tchêtauska, or White Hawk; Mantowa-koua, or Hunting Bear; Gougounapia, or Knuckle-bone Collar, and Mantâtska, or White Bear. Thirty-six chiefs and braves attended the council. I opened the session with a solemn prayer to the Great Spirit, to implore his assistance upon all the members present and each of the tribes represented by them. They kept their hands raised toward heaven throughout this invocation. Then I laid before them at some length the object of my mission, the desires and wishes of the Government in regard to them. I endeavored to strengthen them in their good dispositions, to keep them apart from the hostile bands, for their own security and that of their families, and to bring them to conclude a permanent peace. In their speeches in reply, the chiefs made solemn promises to listen to the advice of the Great Father, the President of the United States, and to keep peace with the whites. They laid before me, quite simply, their delicate and critical position. On the one hand, they alleged their nearness to and relations with the fighting bands, who are their own blood and kin; and the invitations of the latter to take up the hatchet against the whites in defense of the land of their birth; invitations always accompanied with insults and menaces. On the other hand — I will quote their own words: "Commissioners and agents of the Government come to us every year; they are affable and prodigal of speeches and promises in behalf of our Great Father. What is the reason that so many fine words and pompous promises always come to nothing, nothing, nothing?" Then they entered into a series of details concerning the injustices and misdeeds of the whites, and closed by saying: "We continue to hope that our words will reach the ear of our Great Father, that they will enter his heart and that he will take pity on us. The presence of the Black-robe to-day increases our hope and our confidence."

The council lasted several hours, with every indication of a good and fortunate outcome. My religious instruction, which followed the great council, was most attentively listened to. As I spoke of the importance of the sacrament of regeneration, the several chiefs at once harangued their camps, and the mothers made haste to present me their little children, to the number of more than 160, "to dedicate them to the Great Spirit" by baptism.

The Indian life is a hard one; the climate here is very severe. A great number of children succumb before the age of reason, unable to resist the fatigues, privations and maladies which we understand, but for which they have no remedies.

It is a real feast day to baptize these poor little innocents: baptism will have opened heaven to a great number whom I have had the good fortune to meet in my long excursions. I am firm in the conviction that they are interceding with God for me.

The council and baptismal ceremonies lasted until far into the evening. It was a lovely day. I return thanks to heaven and to the Blessed Virgin Mary for all favors received.

May 28th. I said mass late in the morning and gave an instruction at Fort Thompson. The garrison is principally composed of Irish, Germans and French, all Catholics. It was the first visit they had received from a priest. Accordingly a good number made haste to profit by my presence to approach the sacraments. I spent part of the day with them, and employed the remainder in conferences with the Indians, which was the main object of my mission.

May 29th. Early in the morning I became aware that one mule and my horse had strayed away during the night. I was not altogether easy about them: it was quite possible that the hostile Indians, who often roam this region, especially in the dark, had carried them off. I had recourse to the good Saint Anthony, and to my great joy, the two fugitives were brought back to me a short time after my prayer. Breakfast was ready. By seven o'clock we were on the road. The country that we crossed offered the same aspect; various species of flowers continued abundant, while the singing and warbling of numerous birds enlivened to some extent those sad desert plains. We dined on the bank of the little creek called Chain of Rocks: pigeons, snipe and ducks came and offered themselves to our hunter and formed our meal. A curiosity remarkable enough to deserve mention is seen at the Chain of Rocks, near the stream: it consists of five deep and perfect impressions of a human foot. This place is renowned in the Indian legends; some time I will try to give you the whole story. Toward sunset, we camped on Chapelle creek, near three Indian lodges. I found among them old and good acquaintances; they loaded me with friendliness and eagerly presented me nine of their babies for baptism.

May 30th. The glorious day of the Ascension: I offered holy mass for the conversion of the Indian tribes. On leaving, at seven in the morning, the wagon got mired in the deep mud of Chapelle creek. As at the muddy stream near Fort Randall, we had to unload and carry everything over on our shoulders. We succeeded with difficulty and by main force in disengaging our vehicle from its embarrassed situation, and took up our march anew for twenty-five miles. We traversed a mountainous region, full of boulders, for the most part rounded by water. While we were dining at Medicine creek, several Sioux families who were on their travels crossed the stream and took advantage of my presence to obtain, in favor of eight of their children, the benefits of baptism. The road passes within sight of the Missouri and enters the river bottoms. We camped at old Fort Sully, now abandoned; about five in the afternoon, I found myself among 220 lodges of Indians, who received me with every demonstration of the warmest cordiality.

May 31st. As at Fort Thompson, I convoked the chiefs and braves in a grand council. Allow me to give you a second list of our Nestors of the plains. Their names, as in ancient times, are characteristic and significant; they have reference to some remarkable action of their lives. For the most part, they are names illustrious among the tribes of the Great Desert. They are as follows: Nâgi-wakan, or Chief Ghost; Tchêtangi, or Yellow Hawk; Zizikadaniakan, or Man Who Soars Above the Bird; Tokayâketé, or Killed the First One; Matowayouwi, or Dispersed the Bears; Tokaoyouthpa, or Took the Enemy; Wawantaneanska, or

Big Mandan; Wagha-tshawkaeyapi, or Serves as a Shield; Tchatêpêta, or Iron Heart; Ezzani-maza, or Iron Horn; Wâmedoupiloupa, or Red Tail Eagle, and a great number of others.

At the first summons they made haste to the council. I presented to the principal chiefs a miraculous medal of the Holy Virgin, which they received with eagerness and most sincere gratitude. They recalled the favors received from heaven at the time of the cholera, and accorded to the chief Pananniapapi and his band through the intercession of Mary.

As soon as they comprehended the object of my visit, they paid the closest attention to my words. They complained bitterly of the bad faith of the whites, of the commissioners and agents of the Government, always so prodigal of promises and always so slow in fulfilling them, if they ever do so. This conduct sticks in their minds; they propose to wait a while longer and see. In their speeches and in private conversation they declared themselves favorable to peace with the whites and ready to call on their young warriors to bury the hatchet and withdraw from the fighting bands. They expressed also a lively desire to settle on reservations and cultivate the soil. But until such time as their fields produce abundance, they choose to continue to lead the nomadic life and to range the plains peaceably in search of animals, roots and fruits.

This far, all that I have observed and been able to learn among the different bands of Indians makes me augur favorably of their good dispositions to live at peace with the whites, and to make efforts to withhold their young men from committing depredations. They ask, and have a right to demand, to have justice done them; that the annuities granted them by treaty should come to them; that the practice of putting them off with fine words should cease once for all; that they be protected against the whites who come to sow iniquity and misery in their country; and in conclusion they humbly beg their Great Father the President to grant them agricultural implements, seeds, plows and oxen to till the soil. I repeat it, if our Indians become enraged against the whites, it is because the whites have made them suffer for a long time.

At the close of the grand council the mothers, with their babies to the number of 174, were waiting for me for baptism.

I have sent several expresses into the interior of the country to announce to the hostile bands my intention of visiting them. I expect their reply within the next two months. I venture to hope for some result; I offer my poor prayers to the Lord for the good success of my pacific mission, upon which depend my future movements. Meanwhile, I shall continue my visits among the redskins, in the region of Forts Rice, Berthold and Union. My messengers are to wait for me at Fort Sully. To go and come from Sully to Union and return, the distance is 1,430 miles.

June 1st. Heavy rain all night, thick fog and cold weather. Toward noon the sun came through and soon it was stifling hot.

I spent the whole day with the principal chiefs in conversation concerning religion and the present critical and dangerous situation of the plains tribes, toward the American Government. After the example of the whites, the Indians have proclaimed a sort of martial law; the war chiefs have assumed sole command.

To-day I conferred baptism on thirty-three young children of the Brûlé band.

June 2d, 3d, 4th and 5th. These four days were principally employed in conferences with the Indians. The heat is very great. The coming and going is without end. Little Soldier, second chief of the Yanktonnais, has joined the camp; his tribe reckons more than 400 lodges or tepees. He listened attentively to the religious instructions that I gave him and to the messages with which I was intrusted by the Government. Little Soldier in his turn talked to me about the friendly disposition of his tribe toward the whites, who at this moment were awaiting us in the vicinity of Fort Rice.

During these four days, I administered baptism to thirty-nine Indian babies.

In the evening of the 5th a terrible hurricane, accompanied by continuous lightnings, turning night into day, and a roll of heavy thunder like the discharge of a thousand cannon, burst over our camp. One would have thought the last day was at hand. On this occasion, two lovely verses in Flemish presented themselves to my memory:

De velden dreunden door een dorren donderslag,
Nooit zag de wereld een vervaerlyker dag.—

The fields rang with a heavy thunderclap;
The world never saw a more fearful day.

The hurricane lasted several hours. A large number of tepees were blown down. Wagons were taken off in haste by the wind. The violence of the gusts came near carrying away my tent; it took three strong men to hold it upright. The play ended with a deluge of rain and hail, which flooded all the country.

June 6th and 7th. Baptism of two children. Arrival of Generals Sully and Parker, envoys extraordinary of the Government to take special information in regard to the complaints of the Indians against the whites, and the injustices of which they have continually been victims. They are both distinguished generals of the American army, equally noted for their bravery and their probity. We had a long conversation concerning the objects of our respective missions, and it is resolved that I shall accompany them as far as beyond the Yellowstone. We will unite our efforts to bring the tribes back to peace.

June 8th. Baptism of two small children. A grand council was called by the two generals. All the chiefs and braves attended. At the request of the American officers, I made a little preliminary address to the Indians, to draw their attention and inspire confidence. I told them that their Great Father, the President, desired to know all their griefs, in order to apply, once for all, the proper remedy. Then the two generals spoke, and gave particulars concerning their mission to the Indians; they promised that all the speeches made in the council should be faithfully transmitted to Washington and submitted to the President. Each chief, in the name of his band, showed all his mind. The council closed in the most perfect harmony, with a great feast, which all attended, big and little, old and young, and brought excellent appetites with them. I will give you hereafter some of the speeches that were improvised by the chiefs; they are models of good sense and eloquence.

June 9th, Sunday. A large number of Indians attended the divine service and instruction. The meeting was composed of whites, half-breeds and Indians of various bands. Two marriages were celebrated. The divine service was hardly ended when the head war-chief, Mazakampeska or Iron Shell, with several of his braves, presented himself in the camp and paid us his call. A council was held at once. Iron Shell, after preambles too long to be reported here, declared "that he desired tranquillity and peace for his country; but to establish it, three conditions appeared to him absolutely necessary. First, he said, send all your soldiers out of the country; close all your public roads through the Black Hills; and prevent steamboats from coming up the Upper Missouri, so that the buffalo and other animals may not be disturbed." This was the *conditio sine qua non* of Mazakampeska.

General Sully made known to him "that the soldiers had been brought into the country by the massacres that had taken place in Minnesota and on the plains of the Missouri; that if these murders and massacres continued, the number of soldiers would be increased, until they would cover the country as the grasshoppers cover their fields. Bury the hatchet," added the general, "and the soldiers will return whence they came." He said further that he had come to hear the complaints of the Indians and make a faithful report of them to the Great Father. The chief answered and promised to make use of his influence to bring the young men to peace.

Toward three in the afternoon, we started for the new Fort Sully by a fine road. We made twenty-five miles in three hours. The steamboat *Graham* was there with five companies of soldiers destined for the different forts. Our arrangements were quickly made; we left at the fort our vehicles, animals and baggage, and took our places on the boat.

June 10th. The steamboat made an early start, but advanced scarcely twenty miles in the day. All the time was consumed in cutting and taking on wood to supply the furnaces. They are so greedy that they devour each day twenty-five cords of this combustible. The *Graham* is 249 feet in length. It is a floating palace, and the largest boat that has ever come up the Upper Missouri.

My quality of envoy extraordinary of the Government carries with it the title of Major, strangely mated, it must be owned, with that of Jesuit. Still, it must be said in its behalf that it gives me readier access among the soldiers, a great many of whom are Catholics. I gave them, not as a major but as a priest, all my spare moments. Sunday, I said mass in public, in the spacious ladies' cabin; and every day I offered the holy sacrifice in my private stateroom, with the consolation of being able to distribute holy communion to several. I found myself conducting a small mission on board: my days were passed in doing the catechism, and instructing and confessing the soldiers, who hastened to come before me. As we went along, I baptized a lady and her children.

June 16th. We arrived at Fort Rice, 260 miles distant from Fort Sully. Head-winds and the necessity of cutting wood had delayed us greatly. At Rice, on both sides of the river, were about 530 lodges encamped and waiting for our coming. All the tribe of the Yanktonnais, 380 lodges, were here together. The other camps were portions of other bands: Hunkpapas, Blackfoot-Sioux and others.

June 17th and 18th. These days were spent in conferences and councils, in which all the chiefs and the principal braves took part. I will give you another time the particulars of these various gatherings. I made the opening speeches, at the request of Generals Sully and Parker, who made known to the chiefs the intentions of the Government toward them. The chiefs spoke admirably in answer, being both wise and eloquent, and showed a disposition to maintain peace with the whites. Our relations with the Indians promise well for success, and our sessions lasted until late in the evening. The camps being at some distance from the fort and on the other side of the river, I only had opportunity and time to baptize fifteen of their babies. I was taken to one poor little thing that was in its agony, and died a few instants after receiving baptism.

I hope to meet camps of the same tribes upon my return from Fort Union, and to speak to them more especially of religion, of which they seem very hungry to hear.

June 19th. We left Fort Rice early in the morning. The distance to Fort Berthold is 175 miles. We arrived there without the slightest incident.

June 23d. On the way, four antelope were killed by the hunters. My time on the boat was employed in hearing the confessions of the Catholic soldiers and preparing them to approach the sacraments. A native of Brussels, named Charles Smet, was among the number; it was a great consolation to both of us to be able to speak our mother language. He had lost none of his accent. An Irish couple, the servant of the general and a sergeant, profited by my presence to receive the nuptial benediction.

We spent some hours at Berthold in council with the chief of the three combined tribes, the Aricaras, Mandans and Minnetarees of Grosventres. They have always remained faithful to the Government. A final council will be held on our return from Fort Berthold. I will tell you of this later.

June 24th. The steamboat pursues its course. We saw the first herd of buffalo. A large number of passengers leaped ashore to go in pursuit of the animals. A single buffalo was killed. One of the hunters, still green in this kind of hunting, got lost; and in spite of all searches and firing of cannon, could not be found.

June 28th. We reached Buford, near old Fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellowstone. This place is situated 255 miles from Fort Berthold and 2,240 from St. Louis. Fort Buford contains five companies of soldiers. I am dividing my time between writing and making myself useful to the soldiers and to the thirty lodges of Assiniboins. I have baptized a soldier and forty-seven Indian children, and given the nuptial benediction to three couples.

July 7th. Arrival of the Assiniboin chiefs and grand council. All declare themselves friendly to the whites and promise not to yield to the solicitations of the hostiles. We are waiting for the arrival of the Crow and Santee chiefs, to announce and explain to them the wishes of the Government. After that, I shall go down the river to Fort Rice or Fort Sully, and set out into the interior to visit the hostile bands, if the thing is practicable. The number of baptisms up to date is 857.

Pray for me and present my respects to all the brethren.

University of St. Louis, September, 1867.*

At the Yankton agency, near Fort Randall, (1,285 miles from St. Louis) I met the camp of the Yanktons (a Sioux tribe) who are about 2,500 in number. They are at peace with the whites, practice agriculture successfully and are cultivating with care some 1,200 acres. The chiefs, with

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* Extracts from letter in French to Charles De Coster, Belgium, September, 1867.

Pananniapapi at their head, begged me to grant them a mission and establish schools in the tribe. The head chief, a good many adults and all the children of this tribe have been baptized.

At Fort Thompson (1,441 miles) I found upward of 100 Indian lodges (each lodge containing eight to ten inmates) belonging to the tribes of the Brûlés, Yanktonnais and Two Kettles. I had several conferences with them relative to their present situation toward the Government, and especially in regard to religion, to all of which they gave the closest attention.

At old Fort Pierre or Sully (1,525 miles) 200 lodges were set up in a beautifully elevated plain. This was a mixed camp of various tribes — Blackfoot-Sioux, Two Kettles, Brûlés, Yanktonnais, Yanktons, Sans-arcs, Minneconjous and Ogallalas. I spent a good fortnight among them in counseling with the chiefs and instructing the people, and during all my stay among them they treated me with the utmost benevolence, affability and attention. I was surrounded from morning to night.

In the region round Fort Rice (1,810 miles) over 500 lodges, something like 5,000 souls, were awaiting our arrival. The camp was composed of the greater portion of the Yanktonnais (380 lodges) with bands of the Cut Heads, Hunkpapas and Blackfeet-Sioux. They evinced much friendliness for us. At the first appeal, all the chiefs met in council and promised solemnly to maintain peace with the whites, to hold aloof from the hostile tribes and to prevent their young men from going on the war-path. I presented each of the chiefs with a large miraculous medal, which they received with the liveliest gratitude, promising to wear them as souvenirs of fidelity to their promises. I spent my time very agreeably among them, instructing the Indians and baptizing their children.

At Fort Berthold (1,985 miles) I met my old friends the Aricaras, Mandans and Grosventres or Minnetarees, who form one large village nearly two miles in circumference.

There are some 3,000 of them; they live in permanent earthen houses. All their children are baptized; they are at peace with the whites; they cultivate a large field (1,200 acres), raising corn, potatoes, melons, and beans, with no tools but sharpened sticks, with a few spades and mattocks. They complained bitterly of the Government agents and the soldiers. They first deceive them and rob them in the distribution of their annuities, and the others demoralize them by their scandalous conduct. All last winter they were the playthings and slaves of a hard and tyrannical captain, who seemed to make it his business to torment the poor wretches. When the old women with their starving babies came up to the fort to pick up the filthy refuse thrown out of the soldier's kitchen, they were pitilessly driven off with scalding water, thrown upon their emaciated bodies, covered only with rags in the severest of the cold weather. The head chief of the Aricaras, named White Parfleche, in his speech to Generals Sully and Parker, drew a vivid picture of the miseries of his tribe. Their crop having failed, they were reduced to famine and all assistance was refused them by the captain of the fort. "Reduced to the last extremity," he said, "I implored the Great Spirit in the name of the children baptized by the Black-robe. My prayer was granted. The excessively cold weather moderated, and before the sun set we killed several buffalo alongside our camp-fires. Yes, the Great Spirit loves his little children."

At Fort Buford, at the mouth of the Yellowstone (2,240 miles), a good number of chiefs and braves belonging to the various bands of the Assiniboins made their peaceableness and fidelity to the President evident to the Commissioners. At all the military posts on the Missouri river a good share of the soldiers are Catholics, and my ministrations were called for everywhere. A general of the army and several officers set the good example of approaching the holy table.

In all the public speeches of the chiefs and in all the private talks I had with them, they all showed a friendly disposition toward the whites and a strong determination to keep aloof from the hostile bands. We kept a strict list of all the complaints made by the Indians, which has been transmitted to the Department of the Interior. I am firmly convinced that if the just claims of the Indians are attended to; if their annuities are paid them at the proper time and place; if the agents and other employees of the Government treat them with honesty and justice; if they are supplied with the necessary tools for carpentry and agriculture, the Indian tribes of the Upper Missouri, of whom I have spoken above, would maintain peace with the whites; and the warlike bands who to-day infest the plains of the Far West and the valley of the Platte, where there is so much destruction of property and loss of life, would promptly cease their depredations and would not be long in joining the stay-at-home tribes. "If the savages sin against the whites, it is because the whites have greatly sinned against them."

There is much talk just at present of placing all the Indian tribes on one or two large reservations. It is not possible to change the nature of any race of men in a moment. The Indians told us "that they were born to be hunters and to range the country in pursuit of animals." It will take patience to transform them into cultivators; the thing will necessarily require some years. The Indians whom we visited were disposed to choose reservations, suitable for agriculture, on their own lands. In every band a good number of families showed a favorable disposition to go to work without delay and urged us to have them furnished with plows and oxen. If they succeed for the first three years in their noble efforts, the example of that industrious portion would soon be followed by the mass in every tribe: and if once the great advantages of agriculture, of raising domestic animals and poultry, were understood, especially after once living in abundance as the result of their own labor, they could afterward easily be led to one or two large reservations like those of the Delawares, Cherokees and Choctaws.

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While I was among these river tribes, I sent several Indians as deputies among the hostile tribes. I stocked them with packages of smoking tobacco, to distribute among the chiefs. Each package served as a letter of introduction, to invite them to come and talk over their position. Upward of 100 chiefs and warriors came at my request to Fort Rice, in the hope of finding me there with the Commissioners, Generals Parker and Sully. They waited there for us for ten days, and only went away when the lack of provisions forced them to do so. They therefore set off on their two-months' buffalo hunt to provide for their families. At leaving they sent word to me especially by two interpreters that they greatly desired to see the Black-robe and talk with him. I was assured that they all seemed favorably inclined toward peace. I hope that my health may permit me to go among them early next spring.

I have just this instant received a letter from the Secretary of the Interior, dated the 24th of this month, in which he gives the following testimonial, which it gives me pleasure to communicate to you: "You will please accept my thanks for the faithful and efficient manner in which you have discharged the duties intrusted to your care."

August 30, 1867.[7]

Here I am again at my post in St. Louis after an absence of four months and some days: Upon my arrival here the thermometer was in the neighborhood of 100°, and coming from 48° North I found myself singularly exhausted and feverish. I had been unanimously admitted at Leavenworth among the Peace Commissioners recently sent out by the Government among the Indian tribes of the Far West. I had accepted my nomination but was obliged to return to St. Louis, having sent thither my trunk, bed and all my traveling necessaries. Then this sickness coming upon me, I had to give up this second mission by the doctor's orders.

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[7] Extract from letter in French to Reverend Father Cosemans, Belgium, August 30, 1867.

My four months among the Indians have had a happy and consoling result, with the grace of the Lord, and the intercession of our good Mother Mary, aided by so many prayers of my dear brethren and acquaintances and those of our little children in our schools. The baptisms of children amount to nearly 900, and forty-six adults. * * * I visited a great number of Sioux tribes or parts of tribes, coming altogether to some 15,000 Indians, and everywhere I was received with the greatest kindness and eagerness. They gave diligent attention to all my religious instructions, and listened favorably to the words that I brought them from the Government. They promised to hold aloof from the hostile bands and not to yield to their invitations. A good many even of the hostiles came to see me and I believe a general peace could be brought about, if honest agents were employed to treat with them. * * *

I had a long interview with the Commissioners which has been published by their orders.

St. Louis University, September 17, 1867.

Dear Mr. Galpin:

I received, yesterday, your kind favor of the 24th ultimo, and rejoiced to hear from you. I trust you will favor me frequently with news from above; particularly concerning the hostile bands in the plains. I will give you here a short statement of my situation and of the impossibility I am in of returning to the upper country in the course of this fall.

I left you with an intention to return to Fort Rice and await the arrival of the Indians (during one or two months). At my arrival at Sully, I found my wagon and animals in an unfit condition to stand a long trip and determined on proceeding with Generals Sully and Parker.

At Leavenworth I met the new Commissioners and held a long conference with them. I accepted of their invitation to accompany them on their visit among the Missouri tribes. I left immediately for St. Louis, where my traveling effects had preceded me. At my arrival home, such was the heat (100°), that I became sick and have since been incapable of moving about. Let the Indians know, particularly the hostile bands, that I am very desirous to see them, in the name of the Great Spirit and for their own welfare. I shall try my best to be at Fort Rice early next spring and leave St. Louis by the first good steamer. To that effect, I have offered my services to the Secretary of the Interior, should they allow me means to defray my expenses. I trust we may be able to make such arrangements as may suit to bring about the desired understanding and good will between the Indians and the whites. I coincide with you, that if peace can be made with the Sioux, the other tribes will soon follow their example.

Please write often. Prepare the minds of the Indians in regard to my intended visit and let me know every particular concerning them.

I saw Miss Picotte the other day; she is very well. I sent two books by Captain Honey to Colonel Otis — I hope he will receive them. Present him my best respects and to your lady and friend Irane La Framboise and all other acquaintances.

Most respectfully, etc.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PEACE COMMISSION OF 1868.

Projects for another visit to the hostiles — A German-Indian princess — With the generals to council at North Platte — Cheyenne and Sherman Pass — Back to Omaha and up the river — Reception at Fort Rice — Eagerness to accompany him — Start for the interior — Camp life — Sends tobacco to the enemy — Success of the scouts — Lovely landscape — Reception by the hostiles — Entry into Sitting Bull's camp — Confidential talks — The great council — Laying on of hands upon Indian children — The return — Successful consummation of treaties of peace — Testimonial of commissioners.

St. Louis University, Dec. 21, 1867.

Messrs. Galpin and La Framboise, Fort Rice:

DEAR SIRS AND FRIENDS.— I received your letter of the 12th October, in answer to mine of the 17th of September. The last letter of the 22d of October reached me some time ago. I am very thankful for the information you have had the kindness to give me. My health is tolerably good at present. I hope to be at Fort Rice in the spring, as early as possible. I desire much to see the hostile tribes. For their own good they must come to a good understanding with the whites and accept the peaceful measures the Government proposes to them. In case of refusal on their part I am afraid they will see hard times. Try your best to obtain a favorable reception for me among the hostile bands; I have only their welfare at heart. Give an answer at your earliest opportunity to the following queries:

Will I be able to obtain an interpreter at Fort Rice, to accompany me in the interior? A light strong conveyance, a driver and a couple of horses or mules? What sort of goods and provisions should I best provide myself with? I mean goods to make little presents to the Indians I may meet, and provisions for my traveling companions and self during the trip.

Please attend to the following and give me a speedy answer: At the house of a Mr. Rudolph Mackwith in St. Louis, a half-breed Sioux girl has been brought up. Her father, a German, whose name I do not remember at present, was a trader at Fort Pierre, at Vermillion, and probably in other posts. He belonged to a noble family in Germany. His mother is wealthy and willing to adopt her Indian granddaughter. The German trader had for wife the daughter of the chief called "The One that Makes Stripes." Please give me his Indian name, and name of his daughter in Indian, with its meaning in English, and add whatever good qualities you may remember in regard to the chief and his daughter. To make the remembrance of the German trader clearer to you, he had also for wife (probably after the death of the daughter of the "The One that Makes Stripes"), the daughter of old Zephyr Rencontre,[1] who died at Yankton Agency, over two years ago and had been blind for a long time. If you will understand what all my inquiries mean, by stating confidentially that the relations of the German trader have been informed in due time of his marriage with an Indian princess, and they are anxious to admit the young princess into their noble family circle. She is young and beautiful and may in time become a European queen — who knows?

In your next letter enter into particulars, as much as you can, in regard to the hostile bands and their dispositions. The Commissioners, who have been lately on the Platte, are now in Washington, holding consultations on what has been done and on the future course to be adopted, in regard to the Indian war. Hitherto nothing is known of the resolutions taken. I hope they will terminate favorable.

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[1] Zephyr Rencontre was one of the most distinguished and capable of the Indian interpreters on the Missouri. His career was a long and useful one, running through some forty years of active service. He served on many important expeditions and was always trusted by his employers. His services to the Government were of great value.

Present my best respects to the worthy Colonel Otis and all friends who may remember me at Fort Rice.

Most respectfully, Dear Friends,
Your humble servant and friend,
P. J. DE SMET, S. J.

P. S.— I should have added to my first queries, to let me know the probable cost, monthly, for interpreter, driver, light wagon and horses or mules.

St. Louis University, Jan. 28, 1868.

General W. T. Sherman:

General.— I hope my letter will reach you in Washington and you will please excuse the liberty I take of addressing you. I desire to expose to you my actual intentions and views, as to my future trip and visit among the Indian tribes on the Upper Missouri. I received several letters in the course of the present winter, from Messrs. Galpin and La Framboise, traders and interpreters at Fort Rice, acquainting me with their interviews with several chiefs and warriors of the hostile bands. They informed me that these Indians expressed on all occasions a great willingness and desire to see me and promised to use their influence to admit me among the hostile tribes. I have informed them that I was anxious to accede to their request and had an intention to make an early start and leave St. Louis in the first steamer bound for the Upper Missouri. Should my trip meet with the approval of the Honorable Mr. Taylor and Honorable Indian Commissioners, if thought worthy of the charge, I would feel happy in exerting myself, to the best of my power, in carrying out any orders or intentions which might be confided to me. I hope I can truly say, that the object in offering my services in this affair proceeds merely from a feeling for the general welfare. In my long intercourse among the Indian tribes (for about thirty years) I have found the Indians always kind and attentive. I would feel happy indeed should I be able to do anything that might tend to promote their future welfare, in accordance with the views of Government.

My intention is to visit the hostile bands of Indians, who may be willing to receive me, as early as possible and to use my utmost to instill into their minds, "peace and good will to all men." I must add, that my means are rather limited. I ask for no emoluments for myself, and am only performing my yearly missionary excursion, to which I am in duty bound. When I sent in my accounts, last August, of the moneys confided to my care ($2,500) by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for my trip in the upper country, I had a surplus of $923.30, which I placed at the disposal of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. He left it in my hands till further orders. Might I not humbly ask for the use of that sum, toward the defraying of the necessary expenses of my coming excursion among the upper Indians. I shall need an interpreter, a small conveyance for my little baggage and provisions and one man in attendance. On such occasions and whilst there is danger of life, wages are pretty high.

Pardon me, General, for troubling you in your many occupations. Your being a member of the "Indian Peace Commission" has encouraged me to address you on this subject. I shall feel most grateful to receive from you a word in answer to the above.

With sentiments of the highest consideration of respect and esteem,

I have the honor to be, General,

St. Louis University, Feb. 22, 1868.

Mr. Galpin, Fort Rice:

Dear Sir,— I hope my letter of the first of December last reached you. I am anxiously awaiting an answer to my various queries. My health is tolerably good at present and should it continue, I propose leaving St. Louis in the beginning of next April, on one of the first boats, in company with Captain Hany. When occasions present themselves at Fort Rice, please let the Indians of the interior know of my coming and let them be well and fully persuaded that nothing is nearer and dearer to my heart than their welfare and happiness. I pray daily to the Lord that peace and quiet might be restored and reign again through the land. It would be to me the greatest consolation should I be able to do anything to bring it about. On it alone depends altogether the future welfare of the Indians. I trust I shall meet some of the chiefs and warriors at Fort Rice and its vicinity, and I shall be able to accomplish my desire of visiting their friends in the interior for that purpose. I rely strongly upon your promise of last summer: that either yourself or Mr. La Framboise will accompany me and aid me to obtain the desired object. I remember well how deeply you felt interested last year, in bringing about the pacification of the Indians and offering your services. As to the terms, I may as well here add, I doubt not we shall be able to come to a good understanding. As expressed in my last letter, I hope I shall be able to hire, at Fort Rice, some vehicle or conveyance, with the necessary animals for my trip in the country. I should gladly receive the list I called for, of the most necessary goods and provisions I may most stand in need of.

I see occasionally your good daughter. She is very well and continues to be much pleased with the academy.

Please present my best respects to Colonel Otis, etc.

Yours,

St. Louis University, Feb. 25, 1868.

Mr. F. F. Gerard:

Dear Friend.—I received yesterday your kind favors of the 15th and 20th ult. for which I return you my most sincere thanks. Your graphic description of the wonderful appearance of the sun on the 14th of January has been read with great pleasure and astonishment and shall be preserved.

What you tell me of the condition of the Indians is truly afflicting and deplorable. I saw General Sherman a few days ago. He assured me that a resolution had been passed in Washington, that the distribution of annuities, henceforth, will be made under the special supervision of an officer of the army, whose special duty will be to prevent all frauds. An Indian Department, independent of all others, is to be instituted, very different in many points from the old Indian Bureau. I have not as yet seen its laws and regulations. When received I shall forward them to you. Continue to encourage White Shield and all our Indian friends about Berthold. All their speeches and complaints have been faithfully transmitted to the authorities in Washington, by Generals Sully and Parker. How far they may have been acted upon I cannot say. I have no doubt they will produce a good effect in favor of the Indians.

At my arrival (August 12th) in Leavenworth from the upper country, I met the new Commissioners and gave them an exposition of my visit to the various tribes. They have been out till late in the fall. Their reports have not yet been published. They will return to the Indian country in the coming spring. I hesitate not to say, that the gentlemen composing the commission are all animated with the best of feelings toward the Indian tribes and to provide for their future welfare. Resistance on the part of the Indians will finally be overcome and bring great misery amongst them. I need not dwell on the consequences. You know them as well as myself and you certainly will continue to give them your good advices.

I have always felt in favor of the Indians. In my long intercourse with them, they have favorably impressed me and were it not for the continued injustices committed against them, they would, most assuredly, be a better people. For about thirty years I have visited the Indians and have found much consolation amongst them. I would feel happy if my humble and poor efforts could bring them any comfort, and in that desire I intend to pay them another visit, as early as possible. I will leave St. Louis (the Lord willing), at the end of next month, or beginning of April. I am fully authorized to make the trip. I must await circumstances to regulate my trip. I intend to visit Forts Rice and Berthold — your advice and experience are always precious to me. My intention is, if I can possibly effect it, to penetrate into the interior among the hostile bands. I know the dangers of such a trip. I have no other motives than the welfare of the Indians and will trust entirely to the kind providence of God. Please keep to yourself what I am confiding to you, only tell good and trusty Indians to let the hostile bands know of my intended visit and of my intentions in their regard. Remember me to my good friend and chief, White Shield, and all my other Indian friends at Fort Berthold. My best respects and good wishes to my old and good friends, Pierre Garreau, to Beauchamp and Pierre my god-son and to all other white friends.

At this moment the disturbances in Washington are very high in consequence of the impeachment of the President. You receive the papers. I shall not dwell upon political subjects. They are altogether out of my line. Our political horizon looks dark indeed!

St. Louis University, Feb. 27, 1868.

Honorable Sir:

I received your favor of the 17th instant. Allow me to express my sincere gratitude for granting me the request

I made, in my letter to General Sherman, and which he had the kindness to refer to you, to wit: "To be allowed to expend the balance ($923.30) left in my charge, toward defraying the expenses of my intended visit to the Indian tribes on the Upper Missouri river and plains."

I accept with equal thankfulness your very kind offer, "should the amount above stated not be sufficient to meet your expenses, the Office of Indian Affairs will see that the deficiency is paid upon the presentation of your statement and account."

My intention is to proceed (at the opening of the Missouri river, in the upper country, toward the end of March or beginning of April), to Forts Rice or Berthold, to which posts the various tribes usually resort during the spring, and if practicable, or in any way possible, I will hence proceed into the interior, to confer with the hostile bands, and use every exertion in my power to make them understand the dangers and evil consequences of the course they are following, and the benevolent views of Government in their regard.

I shall receive with pleasure any instructions you may deem proper to confide with me, which I shall try to execute with all diligence and fidelity.

With sentiments of the highest respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, Honorable Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

P. J. De SMET, S. J.

Honorable N. G. Taylor,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs.
Washington, D. C.

St. Louis University, March 13, 1868.

Honorable N. G. Taylor,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.:

Honorable Sir.— I hereby acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th instant and feel sincerely grateful for the observations it contains in regard to my visit to the upper Indian tribes. Should the good weather continue, I hope I shall be able to set out on my mission at the end of the present month or beginning of April.

My principal object in writing is to communicate to your kind attention the inclosed letter I just received from Fort Berthold. I have been acquainted and have corresponded with Mr. Gerard for a number of years and have always found him very reliable in his statements. From what appears, the winter in the upper country has been unusually severe and the sufferings and destitution of the Indians at Fort Berthold have been very great. Ever since the treaty at Fort Laramie, in 1851, these poor Indians have ever been the true friends of the Government and have withstood all the endeavors, on the part of the hostile Sioux, to bring them over to their side.

With sentiments of the highest respect and esteem, I have the honor to be,

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St. Louis University, March 17, 1868.

Dear Sir.—I received your kind favor of the 9th ult. I am truly grateful to you for the exertions you have made to prepare the minds of the Indians in regard to the object of my intended visit and I am happy to learn of the good dispositions in which a great number of the Indians are in this respect. Continue to assure them that I have no other motive in visiting them than their own welfare and future happiness. It is assuredly my intention, if practicable, to see as many of the camps as I shall be able to meet.

You state in your letter: "Should the commission come up here and give me timely warning, I think I will have them all here by the time you come."

I shall communicate your proposition to General Sherman or to the Honorable Mr. Taylor, and should they act upon it, they will, no doubt, let you know in due time. In asking instructions as to my own future movements in the upper country, I received, for answer: "Your judgment and experience will suggest to you the best manner in which to proceed in carrying out the desires and intentions of Government, and if, in your course, circumstances should require that other directions than those already given (in 1867) should be furnished, they will in due time be communicated to you." The telegraph from Washington (March 16th) in regard to the Indian Peace Commission, had the following: "The Indian Peace Commission will meet at Omaha the 2d of April. All the members expect to be present except Mr. Manderson. Generals Sheridan and Augur will also attend. The intention is to form parties to visit the Indian settlements, one to go to Fort Laramie and the other to New Mexico."

How far this telegram may be relied upon I cannot say. As soon as I receive inside news I will let you know. I intend to leave St. Louis for Fort Rice at the end of the present month. I firmly rely upon your promise and assistance in bringing about good feelings and confidence toward the Government and whites in general among the hostile bands.

I see your daughter occasionally at the convent. She is in the enjoyment of good health and very much beloved and esteemed by the kind and motherly ladies of the academy. I intend to pay her a final visit before I leave St. Louis, and shall take charge of her commissions, if she has any to send to her good parents.

Most respectfully, Dear Mr. Galpin,

To the Hostile Camp on Powder River.[2]

Last March I was honorably requested by the United States Government, as in the preceding year, to go among the Indians of the Upper Missouri, principally among the hostile bands of the Dakotas or Sioux, to endeavor to bring them to peace and to make clear to them the critical and dangerous position in which they would be placed if they persisted in continuing their murders and brigandages upon the whites.

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[2] The following was prefaced to the copy of this letter which Father De Smet sent August 28, 1868, to the editor of the *Précis Historiques*, as published in volume VI of the third Belgian edition.

On the 30th of March I left St. Louis, by rail, in company with Generals Sherman, Harney, Sanborn, Terry, Sheridan and several other envoys of the Government, bound for Cheyenne City, Nebraska, by way of Chicago and Omaha. At North Platte City, at the junction of the two great forks of the Platte river, a council was held with Spotted Tail, head chief of the Brûlés, and his principal warriors. This council terminated favorably, and was followed by a rich distribution of presents — victuals, garments and weapons — which made the hearts of our savages melt with joy.

"I have finished my modest article upon my excursion among the Indian tribes of the Upper Missouri. According to my promise and my custom, I send you the first copy.

"This letter may very well be my last. My health is very much undermined in consequence of the fatigues of my late painful journey of about 6,000 miles, but still more by the shocking heat that we have suffered for three months past. In proportion as I advance in age, heat becomes more and more insupportable to me. Very often any one would say that I resemble a man whose end is at hand.

"Let us take up the subject of my travels.

"After a few days spent among the Potawatomies of Kansas, I found myself really, as you might say, demolished, panting with open mouth for the slight breeze, hardly able to stir the little fine leaves of the acacias which surround and shade the Mission of St. Mary's. This was on the 29th of July. Every one was languishing. I was under a burning sun, with the thermometer ranging from 104 to 109° in the shade, and up to 130 in the sun. I shall, I doubt not, feel the effects for a long time; but, let us be patient, and hope!

"I will try to give you in this letter an account of my missionary journey; but I beg that you will pay no attention to the disconnectedness of my narrative."

From the French of the Linton Album, p. 132 *et seq.*

Cheyenne, by the way, is a real wonder in its way; it was barely six months old on the 6th of last April, and had already nearly 9,000 inhabitants. At the present time this floating city has hardly more than 3,000. Bentonville, in the same region, is only one month old, and on the fourth day of its existence it had a population of over 4,000. Together with the generals, we made an excursion of forty miles, for observation and pleasure, to the summit of the Black Hills, [Sherman Pass] which the railroad crosses on the way to San Francisco. We were assured that this is the highest point attained by a railroad hitherto, being 8,000 feet above sea-level. The Peace Commissioners then turned their faces toward Fort Laramie. According to the arrangement, I returned to Omaha, where I spent the Paschal period. I then took passage on the steamer *Columbia* for Fort Rice, a distance by water of 1,005 miles. The Missouri was at that time very low, and our progress slow in consequence; we had to get over and through many banks and bars of sand and clay. The greedy furnaces of our steamboat consumed fifteen to twenty cords of wood daily. When the boat stopped to cut or load a supply, I often had occasion to exercise the holy ministry among the inhabitants of the region who came down to the woodyard or wharf, marrying couples who were awaiting the presence of a priest to receive the nuptial benediction, and regenerating in the holy waters of baptism a great number of children and several adults. The captain and his first officer (father and son), the two pilots and others of the principal employees, were all good Catholics. I had my little chapel on board and I had every day the consolation of offering the holy sacrifice of the mass. The officers and the Catholic passengers took advantage of this to approach the holy table of the Lord from time to time, especially on the solemn feast days. After thirty-three days of constant struggle with the current, sandbars and snags, I thanked and bade farewell to the worthy captain and all my old and new acquaintances and was put ashore at Fort Rice,[8] in the midst of a great number of Indians, who were waiting for me and overwhelmed me with frienship. They had come thither to be present at the great Peace Council. I reached Fort Rice on the morning of May 24th, the Feast of the Holy Virgin, *"Auxilium Christianorum,"* a most propitious day to obtain from heaven favors for the poor Indian tribes, "seated for so many ages in the shadow of death." For a great number of years they have been asking urgently for Catholic missionaries, Black-gowns, as they call them. This is the only region of the United States destitute of any spiritual aid. Will it some day be furnished with pastors, to lead these stray sheep, so favorably disposed, to the true fold of the Lord?

Upon arriving at Rice, I had first to pass through a numerous file of Indians, ranged along the shore. In all their fantastic accoutrements, they made a truly picturesque and, for the kind, admirable spectacle; their heads were adorned with feathers and silk ribbons, in which red and blue predominated, and their faces were daubed with the most varied colors. I received a good grip from each one, according to their etiquette and usage; I noticed that those who knew me squeezed my hand much harder than the others. My little baggage was then taken to the lodging that had been prepared for me beforehand, and all the great chiefs of the different tribes were waiting for me there to hear the important news of the Government's intentions toward them.

You will readily perceive that I had my hands full at Rice. The first four days after my arrival were employed in the instruction of the Indians and in conferring the holy sacrament of baptism upon all their little children, to the number of six or seven hundred. The 29th, 30th and 31st of May

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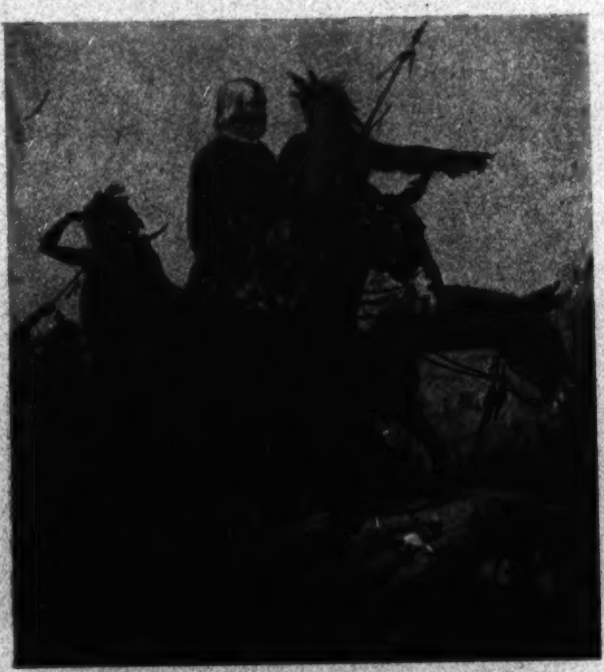
[8] A military post, located on the right bank of the Missouri river, six miles above the mouth of the Cannonball river. It was established in 1864.



FATHER DE SMET RIDING WITH THE INDIANS.

were devoted to the Catholic soldiers, (Irish and German). The greater part of them took advantage of the occasion to approach the tribunal of penance and the holy table, on the solemn day of Pentecost.

The 1st and 2d of June were passed in interviews with the Indian chiefs and in making my preparations for departure to go in search of and to meet the hostile bands in the interior country. My plan seemed to astonish them and they hardly concealed from me the dangers that were involved in it, even touching the security of my scalp. I answered them simply, "the little children, in all their innocence, are the little pets, the little angels of the Great Spirit on earth. Before the image of the Holy Virgin Mary, the good Mother and the great protectress of all nations, six lamps are burning night and day, through all the duration of my journey. In St. Louis and in other places, more than a thousand little children are imploring every day, before these burning lamps, the favor and protection of heaven upon all the band who accompany me. I intrust myself with all my fears to the hands of the Lord." All of them then, as by one impulse, raised their hands toward heaven crying out "Oh! that is fine! We will go with you! When shall we start?" "To-morrow, at sunrise!"

June 3d. I said my mass early to recommend the undertaking to heaven. A short account of my travelling companions will not, I trust, be inappropriate. Mr. Galpin, an old Indian trader, who has spent thirty years in the country, a man of honesty and great experience, generously offered to accompany me in the capacity of interpreter, together with his old wife, a Sioux by birth, a convert to our holy religion and who has great influence among all the tribes of her nation. I will add only the names of the principal chiefs of my escort. Two Bears, head chief of the powerful tribe of the Yanktonnais, who is at the head of 700 lodges or families; a very remarkable man, from his great zeal for peace, his valor and his eloquence. He has solemnly adopted me as a brother. "Running Antelope" is chief of a large tribe of Hunkpapas, renowned for his bravery and his deeds of arms against his enemies, more especially against the whites. For the last year he has accepted all propositions of peace with frankness and ardor, and to-day he is maintaining them devotedly. Besides these I have Bear's Rib, The Log [*le Soliveau*], All Over Black [*le Noir dans tout son entour*], Returning Ghost, Red Cloud, Little Dog and Sitting Crow. These are all remarkable and famous chiefs; they are at the head of my escort, with eighty of their principal braves and warriors. They belong to various bands of the Sioux, as follows: the Yanktonnais, Yanktons, Blackfeet Sioux, Hunkpapas, Minneconjous, Ogallalas, Sissetons and Santees. All of them offered themselves generously and freely in my service, with the sole object of persuading their hostile brethren to lend me an attentive and favorable ear, and if need were to protect me.

We were all assembled; a large circle was formed, in which several officers from the fort and some of the soldiers joined, besides a great number of Indians from all these different tribes. I then offered a solemn prayer to the Great Spirit to put us in his keeping, and made a short address to the numerous friends who surrounded us, recommending us to their pious recollection. Our march began at seven in the morning. We started westward, following the direct course of the sun. We made this day twenty-two miles and encamped on the north bank of Cannonball river.

The country in all the region which we traversed is very rolling and covered with a rich carpet of verdure and, at this season of the year, with a great variety of flowers, always so agreeable to the sight. The starlike blossoms of the cactus, yellow, white and red, were especially prevalent. We had a heavy rain during the day, accompanied by a strong wind, which greatly delayed the progress of our two wagons, carrying our little provisions and the baggage of all my escort. When we reached our camping-place, it did not take us long to make ourselves at home. All seemed animated and enchanted and went joyously to work. The hunters came in with four fine antelope. It would be difficult to run down an antelope. It is spoken of as an extraordinary achievement, that one young Indian of my escort, pursuing one of these animals, by pushing his horse at top speed succeeded in lodging two arrows in the animal's body. The hunter makes use of a stratagem; he imitates the cry of distress of the young ones, and when the antelope stops to look, he gets in his shot.

While some busied themselves about the arrangement of their beds, composed of the small branches of willows and cottonwoods, others hastened to kindle fires, fill the kettles and coffee-pots and arrange rows of roasts on sharpened sticks, to content the inner man, or rather our famished stomachs, to use a more vulgar expression. Every Indian is the owner of an excellent stomach, and, according to my observation, a large capacity; the four antelope, together with a quantity of etceteras brought from Fort Rice, disappeared rapidly at the first supper. Then, for their digestion's sake, they dance around a few times, with the most active movements of arms and legs, accompanied with joyful songs at the top of their voices, suited to the circumstances in which they find themselves at the moment. Then they sit down, and while the inseparable calumet goes its slow rounds from mouth to mouth, they talk and argue upon the affairs of the day, tell stories, give their experiences in the chase or their exploits in war, laugh and joke until sleep overcomes them, when they go to bed. I took occasion to give them various lectures, instructing them in the good custom of offering their prayers of devotion to the Great Spirit, every morning on arising and before going to bed at night.

June 4th. After passing a good and tranquil night, we rose early for the second day's travel. We quickly light the fires again, prepare the kettles and hot water, say the morning prayers, take in haste our cup of coffee, our slice of meat and our biscuit; all this takes about three-quarters of an hour. By five o'clock we were on the road.

There is not room in this letter to give you, day by day, the details of our march and of the country we traversed. To spare you wearisome repetitions, I will mention here that the country through which we rode for about 250 miles, is a succession of smiling undulating plains and of immense high plateaus, entirely without timber. The soil, or vegetable earth, is very light throughout and in many places impregnated with saltpetre, making the standing water disagreeable to drink, and unwholesome. In summer especially running water is scarce. The Cannonball river has but a small volume of flow throughout its entire course. It takes its source in certain promontories, visible at two days' journey, which the Indians call the Rainy or Cloudy Buttes, being incessantly enveloped in a bluish fog. All its tributaries consist of springs, and water-holes which in summer contribute their quota to the mother stream only in the frequent momentary showers, except in rainy seasons. It abounds in little fish, muskrats and beaver. Here and there on the banks of these little streams one finds the elder, the elm and the wild cherry, which has a pretty and fragrant flower and a very agreeable fruit, which the Indians gather with care. When wood fails, dry buffalo dung is used for fuel; it burns like peat. The plains are covered with a short but very nutritious grass called buffalo grass, which will some day serve to support and fatten numberless domestic herds.[4] Everywhere the *pomme blanche* is found in abundance — a kind of wild potato, which Providence has sown here in profusion for the maintenance of its poor children of the desert. When an Indian is pressed by hunger, he has only to dismount from his horse, and armed with a little pointed stick of hard wood, which he always carries when traveling, he will pull out roots enough in ten minutes to satisfy him for the moment. This potato is farinaceous, and is eaten raw or boiled, or cooked with meat; it is a great remedy for scurvy, a malady by which the Indians are hardly ever attacked. Beds of beautiful variegated flowers are seen especially in spots where the soil is very light and sandy.

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[4] This prophecy has long since been fulfilled in the immense stock-grazing business of the plains.

All through this region there are very high promontories or "buttes," which contain the springs where the little streams take their rise, and which tell the traveler the route he is to follow. I will mention here the most remarkable, as given me by my traveling companions. The Three Buttes, the Dog-tooth Butte, White Butte, Sand Butte, *les buttes qui se regardent,* and the Blue Stone Butte. These are the principal ones that we passed. The summit of the elevated plateaus that separate the waters of the Missouri from those of its great tributary, the Yellowstone, must have an elevation of 4,000 to 5,000 feet above sea-level. The surface of the country is covered with scoria, fragments of lava and petrified and crystallized wood. Evidently there have been violent convulsions here, changing the order of nature completely. There are still to be seen in great numbers those mysterious remains of past ages, trunks of petrified trees, of enormous circumference and four to eight feet in height. At this day there is not a vestige of wood there remaining. I have made a little collection of petrifications in those parts, which is the wonder and admiration of our amateurs and professors of geology. The portion of the valley of the Yellowstone and its tributaries, which we traversed, is more sandy and sterile than the eastern part, on the Missouri slope; it is the country *par excellence,* where the cactus, the Adam's Needle (Yucca), the absinths, artemisia and all the plants peculiar to sterile lands, mature in perfection. Here too thick beds of lignite are noticed; wherever they have been on fire, high reddish hills and mounds bear the marks of it.

The large animals that belong to the region we covered (700 miles going and coming) are the buffalo, antelope, deer, elk, bighorn and bear. In the twenty-eight days that we were on the road, our hunters killed five buffalo, more than 300 antelope, and some deer, bighorn and elk. Our rustic tables were abundantly supplied each day, and our good savages never ceased to do honor to the fare.

As we went, we passed by the tombs of two braves, killed in the war and placed on scaffolds. My band halted an instant to pay them homage, smoke the calumet and sing in memory of their illustrious companions. To fight like a brave and die covered with wounds is to them the *Ne plus ultra* of glory. Here are their words: "Thou hast preceded us to the land of souls. To-day at thy tomb we admire thy lofty deeds. Thy death has been avenged by thy brothers in arms. Repose in peace, illustrious warrior!" Women's melodious voices, mingling with the lugubrious tones of the men, rendered the funeral chant really imposing. If time permits, I will speak later in detail of their manners and customs when traveling. I have taken pleasure in making notes upon this subject during my long horseback ride.

June 9th. After six days' journey, having found no trace of the hostile camps, we sent out four scouts from our escort — Le Soliveau, Red Cloud, Little Dog and Sitting Crow — to beat up the country in search of the enemy. We had agreed upon a direction to be followed and upon camping places for several days in advance. Each of them was bearer of a small charge of tobacco. I should mention that sending tobacco is the same thing as a formal invitation, or the announcement of a desire to meet to confer upon important affairs. If the tobacco is accepted, it is a sure sign that you will be admitted among them; if on the contrary it is refused, you may understand that all communication is forbidden, and govern yourself accordingly.

June 16th. We were camped at the sources of the Beaver river, a tributary of the Little Missouri[5] of the Grosventres.

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[5] Now the only stream called by this name. In Father De Smet's time the Teton or Bad river, which enters the Missouri at Fort Pierre, was also called Little Missouri.

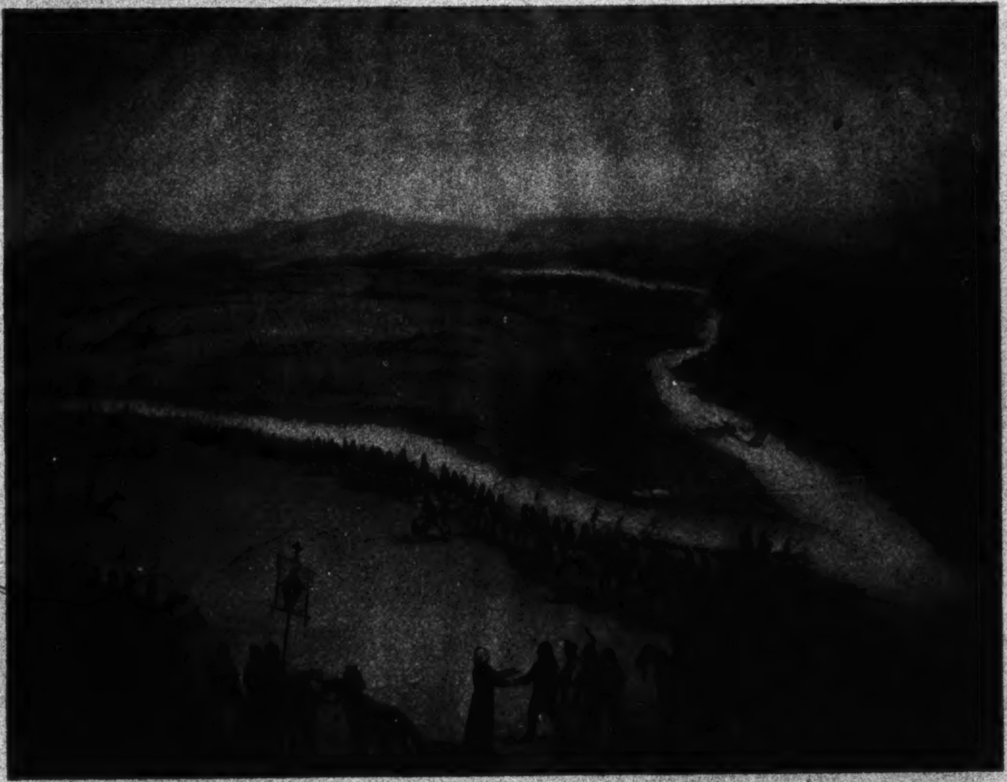
It comes down from the mountainous hills which separate the waters of the Missouri from those of the Yellowstone. Late in the afternoon we perceived afar off the approach of a band of Indians. With a field glass we made out that it was our scouts returning, and before long they came in, at the head of a deputation of eighteen warriors, announcing their arrival by sounding shouts and joyful songs. All came and shook hands with me with especial eagerness, and after we had smoked the pipe of peace together — a first proof of their good will toward me — they announced, in the name of the head chiefs of their camp, that "my tobacco had been favorably received; that entry into their camp was open to the Black-robe alone; that no other white man would get out of it with his scalp; that all the chiefs and warriors were awaiting me with impatience, wishing to hear me and learn the motives of my visit."

Afterward we exchanged news. I learned that the big camp was three days' march away, in the Yellowstone valley, a few miles above the mouth of Powder river. The night was spent in feasts between the Indians of my escort and the newcomers, mingled with joyful songs and fraternal rounds of the calumet. They were uproarious reunions, *à la sauvage*, but harmony and cordiality prevailed.

June 17th. After more or less of a night's sleep, we broke camp early in the morning. It took us several hours to reach the divide. From this elevation the eye covers a most arid and desolate region; it seemed to us to be impenetrable or impassable to our two wagons. It was our defile of Thermopylæ. After careful examination, it was decided to go ahead, and by sheer strength of arms, and by doubling and tripling the number of animals for a distance of six miles, all the ascents and descents were accomplished. In that place there is little vegetation or verdure, or none at all. Thence we passed into the valley of the Poplar, level but very sandy for a great distance; we camped near a pool of green and stagnant water. Here for the first time we found abundance of wood. All the following day was occupied in crossing high rolling plains, in which cactus and absinths predominated for a distance of twenty-five miles, and we encamped on the Big Sandy, a tributary of Poplar river.

Finally on the 19th, after crossing a fine plateau about a dozen miles wide, we came to the beautiful hills which line Powder river. I will say but a word of the lovely landscape which was presented to our sight. Powder river lay before us; its bed is wide and sandy, not deep; at a short distance on our right it pays its tribute to the Yellowstone and mingles its waters with those of a great cataract or rapid above its mouth, the dull sound of which is heard from afar, resembling the distant roll of thunder. At this point, the mountainous hills of the Yellowstone, though entirely sterile, are very picturesque and remarkable.

Some four miles off in the Powder river bottoms, we saw a strong force of horsemen, composed of 400 to 500 warriors, coming to meet me; I at once had my standard of peace hoisted, with the holy name of Jesus on one side and on the other the image of the holy Virgin Mary, surrounded with gilt stars. They took it at first sight for the hated flag of the United States. At this signal, all the cavalcade halted and appeared to enter into consultation. Immediately afterward, the four head chiefs came toward us at full speed, and seemed as it were to flit around the banner. They considered it, and upon perceiving its meaning and high importance, they came up and shook my hand and made signals to all their warriors to advance. They then formed into a single long line or phalanx; we did the same, and with the flag at our head we went to meet them. At the same time the air resounded with shouts and songs of joy on both sides. I was touched even to tears at sight of the reception which these sons of the desert, still in paganism, had prepared for the poor Black-robe. It was the fairest spectacle in which I have ever had the happiness of taking part, and, against all expectation, it was filled with manifestations of the profoundest respect. Everything was



MEETING WITH THE HOSTILE SIOUX ON THE POWDER RIVER.

wild and noisy, but at the same time everything was carried out in admirable order. Upon arriving at a distance of 200 to 300 yards, the two columns halted face to face. All the chiefs came and shook hands with me in sign of friendship, and bade me welcome to their country. Then, surrounded by the chiefs, I shook hands with all the warlike cohort. Exchanges of horses, weapons and garments took place at the same time between the two columns.

This first ceremony ended, the four head chiefs acted as an escort to me, as a guard of honor and to prevent any perfidious attack by secret traitors who might be determined to take vengeance on the pale-face.[*] Preceded by the banner of the holy Virgin, we next took the direction of the main camp, which was ten or twelve miles away and consisted of nearly 600 lodges. Once across Powder river, a close column was formed, and strict military order was observed. The accoutrements were wholly savage. Plumes of eagles and other birds adorned their long hair, and even their steeds had them in their manes and tails, mingled with silk ribbons of various colors and scalps captured from the enemy. Each one had his visage daubed according to his own ideas, with black, yellow or blue, streaked and spotted in every imaginable shade. I took part in this real and unique masquerade, which is seen but seldom here and which I had in no wise expected. Nevertheless, my heart was as tranquil and my mind as calm as if I had been in the midst of you, and I ceased not to form very sincere vows for their conversion. We made our entry into the camp in the midst of 4,000 to 5,000 Indians, big and little, who received us with every sign of lively and sincere joy. Soon afterward, I took possession of a large lodge, pitched in the centre of the camp, which had been prepared for me by order of the generalissimo of the warriors, Sitting Bull, and which was guarded night and day by a band of his most faithful soldiers. Hunger and weariness had taken possession of me; a mouthful of food was prepared for me in haste, and I took a little nap without delay.

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[*] By the penal code in force among the savages, every Indian who has lost a member of his family at the hands of the whites is obliged to avenge himself on the first white man he meets. Well, there were a good many of them in this position at the time of my arrival among them.— *Author's Note.*

When I awoke, I found Sitting Bull beside me, together with Four Horns, head chief of the camp, Black Moon, his great orator, and No Neck. Sitting Bull presently addressed me, saying: "Black-robe, I hardly sustain myself beneath the weight of white men's blood that I have shed. The whites provoked the war; their injustices, their indignities to our families, the cruel, unheard of and wholly unprovoked massacre at Fort Lyon (where Chivington commanded)[7] of 600 or 700 women, children and old men, shook all the veins which bind and support me. I rose, tomahawk in hand, and I have done all the hurt to the whites that I could. To-day thou art amongst us, and in thy presence my arms stretch to the ground as if dead. I will listen to thy good words, and as bad as I have been to the whites, just so good am I ready to become toward them." After this the chiefs talked with me of preparations to be made for the Great Council to be held on the morrow.

The remainder of the day, until a very late hour, was spent in visits and in conversation with the principal warriors and representative men of the camp. One incident that was both consoling and worth reporting took place in my lodge. A venerable old man, of remarkable stature but bowed beneath the weight of age, supporting himself on a staff tipped with an old bayonet, came to offer me his hand and express his happiness at seeing me again. He wore upon his breast a copper cross, old and worn. This was the only religious token that I had observed in all the camp; it filled me with joy and emotion. I questioned him eagerly and with interest, to know from whom he had received this cross. After a moment's thought, and counting on his fingers, he answered, "It was you, Black-robe, who gave me this cross. I have never laid it aside for twenty-six snows. The cross has raised me to the clouds among my people" (meaning that it had made him great and respectable). "If I still walk on earth, it is to the cross that I owe it, and the Great Spirit has blessed my numerous family."

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[7] Sand Creek, Colorado, forty miles below Fort Lyon. Colonel Chivington, of the First Colorado Cavalry, organized the massacre; Major Anthony commanded at Fort Lyon and aided Chivington in person and with troops.

I begged him to explain further, and he continued: "When I was younger, I loved whisky to madness, and at every chance I would get drunk and commit excesses. It is now twenty-six snows since my last turbulent orgy. I was stupid and sick from it; just then I had the good fortune to meet you, and you made known to me that my behavior was against the will of the Master of Life and offended him grievously. Since then, I have often had opportunities; my friends have sometimes sought to induce me to join them in their illicit enjoyments, and often my old evil inclination would combat my good will, which desired to resist the temptation. Every time the cross has come to my help. I would take it between my hands, imploring the Great Spirit to give me strength, and your words, Black-robe, would come to my mind. Ever since we first met, I have renounced drink, and have never tasted a drop."

Armed with the grace of God, the good old man's strength of soul and his good will to resist temptation were really admirable. This good, simple-hearted savage, living among his pagan brothers, in the most hostile camp in the desert, had little trouble in comprehending the most lofty things; he received the light of intelligence from on high and drew strength from the humble little cross. As Thomas à Kempis so well says (book II, chap. XII), the poor savage "found in the cross a refuge against his evil nature, an infusion of heaven's sweetness, strength to his soul and gladness to his mind." He had always retained a hope of seeing me again; (something very essential was still lacking). I encouraged him to persevere in his good intentions. I spoke to him of the high importance of the Holy Sacrament of Regeneration, which would render him worthy to enter after death into the heavenly fatherland, to live eternally among the happy children of the Great Spirit. Padanegricka, or "Yellow Rickaree," was the old man's name. When I left the camp after the council, he followed me for 350 miles. Every evening, when we encamped, he received an instruction, and on the 28th of last June he was solemnly baptized under the name of Peter. He evinced the most lively gratitude, and returned joyfully to the camp he had left.

June 21st, day of the Great Council. From an early hour, men and women were busy preparing the spot where the council was to be held; this spot covered nearly a half acre of ground, or 2,420 square yards. The whole place was surrounded by a series of tepees or Indian lodges, composed of twenty to twenty-four buffalo-skins each, which were suspended on long pine poles. The banner of the holy Virgin occupied the centre, and on one side a seat was prepared for me of fine buffalo-robes. When all the Indians, 4,000 to 5,000 in number, had taken their places, I was solemnly introduced into this *salon champêtre*, which was improvised for the occasion by the two head chiefs, Four Horns and Black Moon. I took my seat. The council was opened with songs and dances, noisy, joyful and very wild, in which the warriors alone took part. Then Four Horns lighted his calumet of peace; he presented it first solemnly to the Great Spirit, imploring his light and favor, and then offered it to the four cardinal points, to the sun and the earth, as witnesses to the action of the council. Then he himself passed the calumet from mouth to mouth. I was the first to receive it, with my interpreter, and every chief was placed according to the rank that he held in the tribe. Each one took a few puffs. When the ceremony of the calumet was finished, the head chief addressed me, saying, "Speak, Black-robe, my ears are open to hear your words." All this was done with the greatest gravity and amid a profound silence.

I will close this letter by giving you an abridged account of the transactions and speeches that took place at the council. Although it lasted three or four hours, everything passed off in perfect order and decorum.

Rising to my feet and raising my hands to heaven, I made a prayer to the Great Spirit, imploring light and blessing from him and his help in this great meeting. Then, for almost an hour, I laid before them the disinterested motives that had brought me among them, which could only tend to their happiness, if my words were well understood. Especially I spoke to them of the dangers with which they were surrounded, and of their weakness beside the great strength of the whites, if the "Great Father" were forced to use it against them. The harm done by the war had been terrible, and the crimes committed on both sides had been atrocious. The Great Father desired that all should be forgotten and buried. Today his hand was ready to aid them, to give them agricultural implements, domestic animals, men to teach them field-work and teachers of both sexes to instruct their children, and all this offered them without the least remuneration or cession of lands on their part.

All these points were discussed, and it was resolved to send a deputation to the peace commissioners, at my request. Four chiefs spoke; all took practically the same line of argument. It will be enough to give you the speech of Black Moon, together with the ceremonies accompanying it. He rose, calumet in hand, and addressing his people, said "Lend an ear to my words." Then he raised the calumet solemnly to heaven and lowered it to earth; thus invoking, by the Indian interpretation, heaven and earth as his witnesses. At his request, I touched the calumet with my lips, putting my right hand on the stem. I smoked a few puffs; he did the same; and the pipe passed on to others. Then he said, in a loud voice: "The Black-robe has made a long journey to come to us; his presence among us makes me very glad, and with all my heart I wish him welcome to my country. I can understand all the words that the Blackrobe has just said to us; they are good and filled with truth. I shall lay them up in my memory. Still, our hearts are sore, they have received deep wounds. These wounds have yet to be healed. A cruel war has desolated and impoverished our country; the desolating torch of war was not kindled by us; it was the Sioux east of us and the Cheyennes south of us who raised the war first, to revenge themselves for the white man's cruelties and injustice. We have been forced to take part, for we too have been victims of their rapacity and wrongdoing. To-day, when we ride over our plains, we find them spotted here and there with blood; these are not the blood-stains of buffalo and deer killed in the chase, but those of our own comrades or of white men, sacrificed to vengeance. The buffalo, the elk, the antelope, the bighorn and the deer have quitted our immense plains; we hardly find them any more, except at intervals, and always less numerous. May it not be the odor of human blood that puts them to flight? I will say further — against our will, the whites are interlacing our country with their highways of transportation and emigration; they build forts at various points and mount thunders upon them. They kill our animals, and more than they need. They are cruel to our people, maltreat and massacre them without reason, or for the slightest cause, even when they are searching for food, for animals and roots to nourish their wives and children. They cut down our forests in spite of us, and without paying us their value. They are ruining our land. We are opposed to having these big roads which drive the buffalo away from our country. This soil is ours, and we are determined not to yield an inch of it. Here our fathers were born and are buried. We desire, like them, to live here, and to be buried in this same soil. We have been forced to hate the whites; let them treat us like brothers and the war will cease. Let them stay at home; we will never go to trouble them. To see them come in to build their cabins revolts us, and we are determined to resist or die. Thou, Messenger of Peace, thou hast given us a glimpse of a better future. Very well; so be it; let us hope. Let us throw a veil over the past, and let it be forgotten. I have only a word more to say; in the presence of all my people, I express to you here my thanks for the good news that you have announced and for all your good counsel and advice. We accept your tobacco. Some of our warriors will go with you to Fort Rice to hear the words and the propositions of the Great Father's commissioners. If their words are acceptable, peace shall be made." Then he took his seat.

Black Moon was followed by Sitting Bull, Two Bears and Running Antelope. They all touched on the same matters as Black Moon and pronounced in favor of peace. It is useless to report the different speeches, the first will suffice.

At the close of the council, at the moment of breaking up, the chiefs begged me most earnestly to leave my great banner of Peace with them as a souvenir of the great day of the council. I gladly acceded to their wish. I presented the banner to them in sign of gratitude for the confidence with which they had inspired me in all their behavior toward me and the speeches that they had just uttered. At the same time, I conceived a sincere hope that the banner, bearing the sweet name of Jesus and the lovely image of the Virgin, Mother of all nations and Queen of Heaven, might be a gage of future happiness and welfare to all the tribe. I recommended them very specially to the protection of the holy and good Mother, the "*auxilium et refugium Indianorum,*" as anciently in Paraguay, in Canada, everywhere and forevermore.

Afterward there was a singing that roused the echoes of the hills and a dance that made the ground tremble. This was the end of the council; it closed tranquilly, in good order and harmony. Every man then went his way. I betook myself to my lodge, and the principal Indians followed me thither. Then a large number of little Indians appeared, led by their mothers, who had also their papooses or young babies in their arms. I at once came forth to them, and they crowded around, with a rare trustfulness, very unusual among Indian children, to offer me their little hands. The mothers were not satisfied until I had laid my hands upon the heads of all the babies and little ones around me, when they withdrew contented and happy.

A standard-bearer was chosen from among the most distinguished warrior, named Gall [*le Fiel*]. He is a very remarkable man, by reason of his sufferings and a wonderful escape from the bayonets of the American soldiers. He told me the story of his troubles, and I touched with my fingers the scars he bears. He had been arrested on a charge of stealing horses. It was in the dead of winter, and the ground was covered with snow. On the road to the prison at the fort, the soldiers thought or feared that he intended to escape, and they ran him through the body twice with bayonets. He fell, bathed in blood, but being still conscious, he counterfeited death. They trampled him and kicked him, covering him with bruises. To finish their cowardly and cruel work upon their prisoner, they thrust a third bayonet through his neck, and at last threw him into a deep ravine. Here he lay unconscious for quite a while, entirely naked, on the drifted snow. When he came to himself, it was already far into the night. He got up, and walked about twenty miles. When he reached the timber, on the bank of the Missouri, he found a fire, at which he warmed his limbs, stiffened by the cold. The hope of life returned to him then, and he implored the Great Spirit to "take pity on him and preserve him." He then quenched his burning and feverish thirst and washed off from his body the clotted blood that covered it. In the hope of meeting some one, he continued to drag himself on, and after traveling some miles farther he discovered an Indian lodge. It was that of old Peter, Padanegricka, who treated him like a veritable Samaritan. When it was daylight, his host conveyed him on a stretcher to the main camp, where he was received with all the honors of a great warrior. Upon hearing his tale of the soldiers' cruelty and seeing his wounds, the rage of the warriors knew no bounds, and a great number of unhappy whites fell victims to it. In less than a year Gall himself set out on his war of vengeance, and returned to camp amid acclamations, with seven white scalps on the end of his lance. Gall was one of the Hunkpapa deputies who accompanied me to Fort Rice. He was well received there by the generals of the commission and the officers of the post; he took part in the Great Council, made the first speech and signed the treaty of peace. He was loaded with presents, and returned satisfied to his people.

June 21st, Feast of St. Louis of Gonzagues. I said my mass at an early hour, and before sunrise we commenced our return to Fort Rice, where the Government commissioners were awaiting me. My escort of eighty-four men was on the spot. The eight Hunkpapa deputies were also on hand, and some thirty families of the hostile camp (numbering 160) chose to accompany me. As at my arrival, the four head chiefs and the principal warriors acted as my escort, and only left me after seeing me across Powder river, showing me esteem and respect to the last.

We traveled thirty-five to forty-five miles every day;[8] the weather was fine and favorable and wild animals (buffalo

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[8] While on the way back the following correspondence passed between Father De Smet and the commissioners:

Box Elder Camp, June 25, 1868.

Honorable Peace Commissioners:

On the 21st instant, we left the united camp of Uncpapos, Blackfeet Sioux, Minniconjous, some Sans Arcs, etc., consisting of over 500 lodges. They were encamped on the Yellowstone River, about four miles above the mouth of the Powder river. This day we start the bearer "All Over Black" with these few lines to give you some idea of our success at the camp, which from all appearance has been most favorable. The full details of our reception and of the great council held on the next day, I shall omit for the present and reserve for our arrival and antelope) were abundant. As we journeyed, I conferred the holy sacrament of baptism on some sixty small children and five adults of advanced age, among whom was the good old man, Peter. On the 30th of June we made our solemn entry into Fort Rice, where we were received with demonstrations of the liveliest joy by the peace commissioners, the army officers and thousands of Indians who were there assembled.

at Fort Rice. The other day I held a council with the principal men who accompanied us to the hostile camp — they are all unanimous in testifying that the object of our mission has been accomplished. The camp has sent several of their principal men, who are now with us, to make the final arrangements at Fort Rice. The reception the Indians gave us (over 400 in number, who had come in advance to meet us) was one of the grandest I ever witnessed. They were headed by the Black Moon, Sitting Bull, the Gall, No Neck, White Gut, and many other of the principal chiefs and braves.

We hope to meet the Honorable Commissioners in about five days.

With sentiments of profound respect and esteem, I have the honor to be

Your obedient servant,
P. J. De SMET, S. J.

Honorable Peace Commissioners, Fort Rice.

Fort Rice, June 28, 1868.

Rev. P. J. De Smet, S. J.:

Dear Sir.— Messengers bringing your letter of the twenty-fifth inst. arrived this morning. We are delighted to learn that your expedition has been so successful, and we feel that not only ourselves but the nation owes you a debt of gratitude for the extremely valuable service which you have rendered to it. Generals Harney and Sanborn arrived here on the twenty-first and they will remain until a treaty can be consummated. I very much regret to learn from a letter to La Framboise from Major Galpin, that you are quite unwell. I sincerely trust that you are suffering from only temporary illness and that the rest and quiet which will follow your return will speedily restore you to health.

With sentiments of the highest respect, I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient servant,
ALFRED H. TERRY,
Bvt. Major-General.

The Great Peace Council took place on the 2d of July. Fifty thousand Indians were there represented. It was the greatest council that had been held on the Missouri in fifty years. Everything passed off favorably, and the treaty of peace was signed by all the chiefs and principal warriors. On the 3d and 4th of July, the distribution of presents was made, in good order and to the great satisfaction of the savages.

I left the same day to visit several tribes encamped near Fort Sully, where I gave baptism to all the young children. Afterward I gave a mission for the Catholic soldiers, and on the 11th of the same month I started down the river for Fort Leavenworth, going thence to St. Mary's Mission.

Inasmuch as the testimonial of the peace commissioners has a bearing on my mission among the hostile tribes, although undeserved on my part, you will permit me to close this little narrative by adding it.

P. J. DE SMET, S. J.

Fort Rice, D. T., July 3, 1868.

Rev. P. J. DE SMET, S. J.:

Dear Sir.— We the undersigned, the members of the Indian Peace Commission who have been present at the council just terminated at this post, desire to express to you our high appreciation of the great value of the services which you have rendered to us and to the country by your devoted and happily successful efforts to induce the hostile bands to meet us and enter into treaty relations to the Government. We are satisfied that but for your long and painful journey into the heart of the hostile country, and but for the influence over even the most hostile of the tribes which your years of labor among them have given to you, the results which we have reached here could not have been accomplished. We are well aware that our thanks can be but of little worth to you, and that you will find your true reward for your labors and for the dangers and privations which you have encountered in the consciousness that you have done much to promote peace on earth and good will to men; but we should do injustice to our own feelings were we not to render to you our thanks and express our deep sense of the obligations under which you have laid us.*

We are, Dear Sir,
With sentiments of the highest respect,
Your Very Obedient Servants,
Wm. S. HARNEY,
Bvt. Majr.-Gen. & Indian Peace Comr.
JOHN B. SANBORN, Com.
ALFRED H. TERRY,
Bvt. Major-General U. S. A. & Comr.

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* Both the above letters are in General Terry's handwriting. See also page 1584 for an interesting letter by General Stanley.

CHAPTER VII.

LAST JOURNEYS OF FATHER DE SMET.

A fall on board ship — Beautiful weather at sea — Neptune once more — Peaceful crossing — Escorts party of sisters for Montana as far as Omaha — Visits his first neophytes, the Potawatomies, again — Their present status — Still planning for a Sioux mission.

University of St. Louis.[1]

Very Dear and Worthy Doctor:

YOU ask me for a fresh letter, or rather for the continuation of the skeleton of my itinerary. For the last twelve years, at each of my returns to St. Louis, you have been placing, joyously, your album upon my table. Each recurring sight of it is to me a fresh pleasure, like a meeting with an old and familiar acquaintance, and immediately I resume my pen with gladness, to lengthen the old skeleton with one more page. Taking them altogether, my last journeys, whether by land or by sea, have been fortunate and tranquil. I have only a single accident to record; it was on my eighteenth crossing of the Atlantic. I was on board the *City of Baltimore,* last December, and two days before I reached Liverpool, a furious storm arose — the rolling of the boat was violent — it is the time for falls! Take care! I made a miss — I took my fall, and had two ribs fractured — lucky, as the Belgians say, in these kinds of misunderstandings, to have come out of the mix-up with head, legs and arms safe. I will give you here my nineteenth crossing of the Atlantic.

On the 12th of June, after taking my farewell of the Reverend Fathers of Notre Dame College at Antwerp and of the friends who had escorted us on board — after receiving their good wishes for a fortunate crossing, the *City of Dublin* gave her last signal for departure, at one in the afternoon, and majestically descended the Scheldt. In the evening we issued upon the North Sea, in calm and serene weather — the setting of the sun on such an occasion, always so beautiful and among the great wonders of the Lord, was watched with admiration by all the passengers on board.

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[1] From the Linton Album, p. 148. Written in French.

Furious winds always create torments on the ocean. On the second day out, Sunday, the *City of Dublin* was tipping and pitching over the surface of the waves — it was the timely moment chosen by Neptune to levy his tax and exact his painful tribute from the passengers on board. The greater number submitted, willing or not, without the least resistance. This is a sorrowfully amusing scene — contagious moreover to the spectator; but it seldom has serious consequences. Our 400 passengers, with few exceptions, had as if by a common agreement and simultaneously adopted a dolorous bearing, accompanied by grimaces and gestures and by efforts to yield up and satisfy the exigencies of the pitiless Neptune. All the deck presented groups of families, standing or lying, pell-mell, fathers, mothers and children, sparing not one another, covered and surrounded with most disagreeable heaps. The comedy lasted until toward evening, when the ocean resumed its calm and the boat ceased its rolling. Pumps and buckets were then brought into use, and all these slutteries deposited on the deck were thrown into the sea, to serve as pasture to the sea-calves and their numerous aquatic comrades — the gulls followed the vessel in flocks, and participated also in the great feast of the Neptunian tax.

On the 16th, with superb weather, the *City of Dublin* entered the beautiful bay of Queenstown, Ireland. The whole day was employed in taking on coal; at eight in the evening of the same day the anchor was raised and the steamer shot forth again toward its destination. The ocean was calm and tranquil, and maintained its serenity thereafter throughout the crossing. The wind, or rather the breeze, without being strong, was always contrary. I may remark here that westerly winds predominate, ordinarily, in these seas, through three-quarters of the year.

In the neighborhood of the Banks of Newfoundland, for several days in succession, the fogs were so thick that the alarm-whistle had to be kept going, to prevent any meeting or collision with other boats. This piercing whistle is a mournful sound, repeated every five minutes, day and night — it is difficult to accustom one's self to it. At this season of the year, these fogs are caused by the meeting and mingling of the warm water of the Gulf Stream with the cold water of the Arctic Current, which brings down in its course numerous glacial islands, detached from the coasts of the North Pole. These islands often have a depth beneath the surface of thirty to forty yards. From time to time, whales, sharks and other marine monsters came and offered themselves to our view, as if to amuse us with their leaps and plunges, and thus vary the sad monotony of our long voyage.

The passengers on the *City of Dublin* were for the most part Germans and Swiss, with a sprinkling of Belgians, Hollanders, French and Italians. A large number were Catholics, and we had the sweet consolation of being able to be useful to them in a religious way especially. The greater part were artisans or farmers, seeking to find work and better their lot in America. All our crossing was quiet and peaceful; so far as I know, there was no serious call made either on the surgeon or on his stock of drugs, and not the slightest accident occurred to trouble or delay the vessel in her progress. We humbly attributed all these favors to the numerous good prayers offered in behalf of our travelers. Glory to God and to the Immaculate Virgin, *Stella Maris,* for all the kindness of heaven.

On the 29th, in the forenoon, we entered the harbor of New York — the summer was then at the height of its heat — truly, it was very exhausting to me. The change from the moderate calm climate of Belgium was too sudden, and I felt it very much. I obtained free entry of all my effects at the custom-house, which I consider a distinguished favor. I had four great trunks and five boxes, containing sacred vessels, pictures and ornaments for our poor Indian churches, and books for our libraries. I had to spend a couple of days in running about New York, to attend to my little affairs and execute my commissions.

Early in the morning of the 2d of July, I left the commercial metropolis of the Union, with its million inhabitants, by the Ohio and Mississippi railroad. This line crosses one of the richest valleys of Pennsylvania and the handsome and picturesque vales of the Alleghany Mountains. It crosses the fertile States of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois from east to west. Everywhere the harvest was abundant and beautiful, and the crop promises to surpass those of any preceding years.

On the 3d, toward four in the afternoon, I reached Cincinnati, some 900 miles distant from New York. There I remained until the 6th, and on the 7th I found myself at the end of my long wanderings, in the midst of my dear brothers in Jesus Christ.

A little resumé of my last sixteen months' travels will doubtless interest you, and I will here add them to my "Itinerary." In the long letter preceding this (1868), that I had the honor to forward to you, and to have copied into the Album, concerning my visits and missions among the hostile tribes of the Great Plains, from the beginning of April, 1868, to my return to St. Louis in the course of the autumn of the same year, the distances traveled amount to 5,200 miles, as may be found recorded in the general catalogue of my travels on page 60 of the Album. There remains to add the following list of mileage for 1868-9 to my itinerary. I include my travels and visits during my last trip abroad, in Belgium, Holland, France and England, as far as to the fair College of Stonyhurst, in Lancashire, which amount to over 2,500 miles.

		Miles.
1868.		
Nov. 21.	I went from St. Louis to New York via Cincinnati	1,200
25.	I embarked at New York for the port of Liverpool	3,100
Dec. 11.	I left Liverpool, via London, Antwerp and Ghent for Termonde	500
1868–9.		
	My travels in Belgium, Holland, France and England	2,500
1869.		
June 12.	I left the port of Antwerp for Queenstown	579
16.	From Queenstown bay to the port of New York	2,900
July 2.	From New York, via Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Cincinnati to St. Louis	1,200
	Forming a total of miles to be added to my itinerary of	11,979

TWO EXCURSIONS IN THE FALL OF 1869.[a]

St. Louis University, March 2, 1870.

I have learned that my letter of July 31st escaped the shipwreck of the *Germania* on the French coast, since the mails were saved. I spoke to you of the excessive heat of our months of July and August; I have suffered a great deal, by reason of the sudden transition from a moderate and cool climate to one warm and exhausting. In autumn, the heat abates and so health and strength have come back to me little by little. I have therefore been allowed to make two good excursions, one of 400 leagues, coming and going, and the other of 200. The occasion was as follows:

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[a] From the French of the third Belgian edition, volume VI.

Our missionaries in the Rocky Mountains had urged me to obtain them some religious ladies for the education of young girls in Montana, and to take care, later, of orphans and the sick. With the design of commencing this first Catholic establishment or boarding-school, the Fathers offered their own house, situated in Helena, the capital of the Territory. With my superiors' consent, I went to work without delay, in view of the approach of winter and the great distance to be traveled. I obtained a colony of Sisters of Charity, chosen among sixty-six nuns. I accompanied them to Omaha, in Nebraska. Well recommended, they took their places upon the Pacific railroad, to go 1,100 miles and then take stage from Corinne, in the Territory of Utah; a six-horse stage, which makes the 500 miles to Helena in thirty-six hours. I have since learned, from private letters and the public prints, that the good sisters reached their destination, amid the acclamations of the citizens without regard to creed. *Deo gratias!* By this time their first establishment is in full activity. It is to be hoped that each year other religious houses may arise, according to the needs of two vast regions of the Rocky Mountains, the Territories of Idaho and Montana.

A short time ago, I tried to undertake a second journey, or a visit among the Potawatomi Indians, in the State of Kansas.

We have two schools there, with about 300 pupils. The boys are under the care of our Fathers and the girls in charge of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart. These two establishments are self-supporting and prosperous. The pupils are giving entire satisfaction to their teachers, and their zeal, piety and application are exemplary.

I felt a strong desire to see the Potawatomies once more, especially at a moment very critical and important to them. It was among them that I commenced my missionary career.

They are my first children in Jesus Christ, and everything that concerns them interests me greatly. I have baptized several hundreds of these dear neophytes. At present the Indians are menaced by great dangers. I will tell you all about this, without the least concealment, that you may see the difficulties in which these good savages are involved at this time.

The State of Kansas was admitted to the Union January 29, 1861. Its fertile lands and its central position, between the east and the west of America, attracted a great number of immigrants. It has already more than 400,000 inhabitants, and over 400 towns and villages are in active construction and on the highway to prosperity. The Missions of St. Francis Hieronymo and St. Mary among the Potawatomies have become two cities; one bears the name of the mission, the other is called St. Marysville. Houses spring up as if by enchantment, and everybody exclaims "How lovely! how wonderful!" But here is the sad reverse of the medal.

I will speak only of the Potawatomies, whom I have lately visited, and who are divided into two classes, those who are civilized and those who are not.

The civilized Potawatomies, that is, those of the Indians who are in submission to the American Government, form the majority of this people. They are at the present moment passing through a most critical, but not unforeseen, trial. They have recently received from the Government, with the full ownership of their allotments of land or their farms, a sum of $500 *per capita*, something over 2,500 francs. This was the signal for the arrival of a horde of white men, who swooped down like vultures on these savages, and made unheard-of-efforts to ruin and destroy those innocent creatures, once so happy. Drink, the abominable *whisky*, was brought in abundance to St. Mary's and among all the neighboring peoples, who had also received money payments from the Government. A great many sad sudden deaths took place, mournful consequences of the excesses occasioned by debauches. The missionaries succeeded, not without great trouble, in arresting the terrible scourge, destroyer of all civilization, which was being introduced in a satanic manner among their neophytes.

Despite all the efforts made by those tools of hell, the whites, to brutalize the Indians, the missionaries have not been without consolation. The greater number of the Potawatomies remained faithful during the trial, and edified the priests by their piety and love of work. Those who momentarily abandoned themselves to the sad excesses of drink were not shaken in the faith, and arose directly from their fall. They have all escaped the abyss into which our *civilizers* sought to cast them. Besides, experience is there, to teach the savages that their purses become swiftly empty in these orgies; and as their money disappears, reason gradually resumes its empire in the heart of the duped Indian. Our missionaries therefore hold their ground and are not discouraged; they even redouble their zeal and ardor to arrest the evil and the offenses which divine goodness receives from its children. The Indians are always dear to our good priests' hearts, and their apostolic labors continue to bear consoling fruits of salvation.

Still we must own that the missionary's position among the Potawatomies is more difficult to-day than formerly. He must struggle against all sorts of obstacles: against whisky, with which the whites wish to slay his neophytes; against erroneous doctrines, which false pastors sow with both hands; against race prejudices, the more revolting that they come from our brethren in the faith, weak Catholics, who are Catholics in name only and who are coming over from Europe by shiploads. The priest who takes to heart the interests of the wretch who is groaning under the oppression of the vices which the Author of our salvation condemns, is often opposed in his action by the very ones who ought to recognize and support his zeal and charity.

The noncivilized Potawatomies, or those of the independent Indians who have not divided their lands, and who have shut their ears to the missionaries' advice, are far from being in a flourishing condition. There are about 500 of them. They are called the Prairie Indians. They live in common on a small reservation, surrounded by bad white men, who molest them without ceasing in every way and apply every art to pervert them. What is there for them to do? They ought to be taken south; but they absolutely refuse to emigrate, fearing that they could not endure the hot weather. If they were to try to go to the great plains of the northwest, the Sioux, Cheyennes, and other warlike tribes would dispute their passage. The future of these unhappy creatures is therefore very gloomy.

I speak of the Potawatomies. The same thing is true of a great number of other tribes, which inhabit or have formerly inhabited Kansas. One may well ask, what will become of these poor people? Alas! they are going, by small bands, by families; they are losing their nationality, disappearing insensibly, and finally they are blotted off the map.

Our Indian missions, namely, St. Francis Hieronymo among the Osages, St. Marysville among the Potawatomies, St. Mary's among the Flatheads, St. Ignatius among the Pend d'Oreilles and Kootenais, the Sacred Heart of Jesus among the Cœur d'Alènes and Spokans, and St. Anne at Colville, among the Skoyelpis and scattered tribes of the Columbia river, as well as the numerous stations which our missionaries visit, are at present very much invaded by the whites. Everywhere these sorry adventurers make use of all iniquitous means to get rid of the Indians or force them to move.

If the missionaries are to effect real good among the savages, under the present circumstances, they will need a profound humility, a truly disinterested zeal, and above all a sovereign scorn for the judgments of men.

1870.

September 14, 1870.

Dear Doctor:

A short notice of my visit and missionary excursion among the Indian tribes of the upper Missouri river, in the course of last summer (June, July and August) may be acceptable to you. Notwithstanding the excessive heat and the fatigues of our long journey, we have had the consolation of gathering some spiritual fruit. On this occasion I had for companion the Reverend Father Pauken, a fervent and zealous laborer, filled with the spirit of his holy vocation. In every locality the Indians received us with marked tokens of joy and kindness and paid great attention to our religious instructions and advices, in regard to their actual position with Government. They occupy extensive "reservations" of land, they are clothed and fed and receive their weekly allowances, consisting of sugar, coffee, flour, corn, pork and fresh meat, and with this timely assistance they are kept from misery and starvation, for the buffalo, heretofore their daily bread, and other great animals are fast disappearing from their hunting grounds.

The Indians, everywhere, asked earnestly for missionaries. It is to be hoped that this ardent desire on their part may be accomplished and that early next spring, a permanent mission may be opened in their midst.

The nation of the Dacotahs or Sioux is divided in a great number of tribes with distinctive names who form a total number variously estimated at from 50,000 to 80,000 souls, roving over a far-extended wilderness. It is the most numerous nation in the United States. In our last[8] missionary excursion, we have visited from 15,000 to 20,000 Sioux Indians. The number of baptisms of adults and children amount to 434.

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[8] This word has a significance here which Father De Smet did not intend. The expedition of 1870 was the last of his many journeys into the Indian country.

PART VII.

THE INDIANS.

Their manners and customs, traditions, religious notions, and relations to the whites. Except where otherwise noted the letters have not been published.

CHAPTER I.

RELIGIOUS OPINIONS OF THE ASSINIBOINS.[1]

Need of more missionaries — Letter from Crazy Bear — The Great Spirit — Sacrifices — The spring Medicine Lodge — Dances — The Sun — Bears — Ghosts and the dead — Future existence — Murder and revenge — Theft — Adultery — Oaths — Thunder birds.

Cincinnati, College of St. Xavier, July 16, 1854.

Reverend and Dear Father:

VOCATIONS, alas! are still extremely rare; we must have ecclesiastics from Europe to go to the aid of the benighted Indians, who are without guide or pastor, and always desirous and anxious for them. I annually receive letters and most pressing invitations from the chiefs of the Indian tribes on the Upper Missouri and among the Rocky Mountains.

The following is a faithful translation of a letter I received from a great chief of the Assiniboins. They occupy the plains of the Yellowstone and of the Missouri: they number about 1,500 lodges and speak the Sioux language. My correspondent and petitioner is the great chief, "Crazy Bear." He was one of the deputation of chiefs who accompanied me to the Great Council in 1851:

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[1] Letters IX and X, Second Series, *Western Missions and Missionaries.* Addressed to the editor of the *Précis Historiques.* Letters IX and X, *Cinquante Nouvelles Letters.* The English text is followed.

"*To the Medicine Man of the White Nation.*

"*Black-robe, Father and Friend:*

"I was so happy as to become acquainted with you at Fort Union, in the summer of 1851; but I was then ignorant, in a great degree, of the motives of your visit among us, and hence I could not discover to you my inmost feelings and explain to you my thoughts. At Fort Union you preached to us — telling us of the Great Spirit and his law. You said you would like to come and teach us, so as to ameliorate the mental and moral condition of our tribes. I think, also, that you gave us reason to expect that after two or three winters some Black-gowns would come and establish themselves among us, in order to show us how to live well and how to train up our children. Afterward we traveled together as far as the Platte. During that journey and since my return from Fort Laramie I have learned and heard much of the beautiful word of the Great Spirit, which you first made known to us. Now I am persuaded that this word would change our state and render us happy. At the Great Council, our great Father (Colonel Mitchell, superintendent of Indian Territory) told us that some Black-gowns would come and live among us in the course of four or five years. Black-gown, five years are long to wait! In this long interval I and many of my children may have entered the land of spirits. Take pity on us! The Black-gowns ought not to delay their coming so long. I am growing old: before I die I should like to begin the work, and then I could depart satisfied. My country is tranquil, we are at peace with all the surrounding tribes — our ancient enemies, the Blackfeet, are the only ones we have to fear; but we can protect you. All my nation call aloud for the Black-gown, and invite him to come with all speed: I sincerely hope that our expectation may not be deceived. We know that the Black-gowns devote themselves to the happiness and well-being of the Indians. If to hasten the project pecuniary aid be wanting, I will cheerfully give a portion of the annuities of my tribe to meet this deficiency.

"I see the buffaloes decrease every year. What will become of us without help? If our children are not instructed in time, they will disappear like the game.

"I have learned that the 'Long Knives' (the Americans) have bought the lands of the Chipeways, Sioux and Winnebagoes, as far as Red river, and of the Pawnees, Omahas and Otoes on the Missouri. The whites are approaching us on the north and on the west, which is a new motive for hastening the arrival of the Black-robe among us.

"I hope my words will reach you, and that you will think of us and our destitute situation. Do this, Black-robe, at the request of your friend,

"THE BEAR,[2] *Chief of the Assiniboins.*"

At this time thousands of whites are settling in the Indian Territory from the Kansas to the Niobrara, and two large Territories have been erected by Congress, called Kansas and Nebraska. It is not yet known what arrangements will be taken for the protection of the different aboriginal nations that are found in them; it is much feared that they will be exiled farther into the western wilds. You can see what I said in my second letter, in January, 1852.

The sect of Mormons is making extraordinary progress in the United States. I will endeavor to send you some new and original details on them, which I am now preparing.

The agitation and prejudices against our holy religion are so great here just now that Catholic papers from Europe can scarcely reach us. We are on the eve of great difficulties. The anti-Catholic spirit increases daily. All the enemies of our holy religion are leagued against her. As in all persecutions, they seek to excite the masses by atrocious lies and calumnies. Within the last few days three Catholic churches have been destroyed, and every paper speaks of some new exhibition in some part or other. European demagogues labor with all their might to establish on the American soil their maxims of intolerance and persecution. Of all tyrants, they are the most terrible and fearful.

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[2] See note, p. 510.

Cincinnati, College of St. Francis Xavier,
July 28, 1854.

Reverend and Dear Father:

In my last letter, dated the 16th of this month, when sending you the translation of the address of Crazy Bear, the great Assiniboin chief, I promised you a sketch of the religious and superstitious opinions of that nation. I will now fulfill my promise.

I here propose acquainting you with the religious worship and moral code of the Assiniboins: it may be considered as the type of the superstitious creed of the greater portion of the barbarous tribes which roam over the forests and prairies of the upper Missouri.

Shrouded in idolatrous darkness, these people have no clear idea of their origin or end. Upon the momentous questions, "Whence came I?" and "What is my future destiny?" there are various conjectures, even among those nations who have received even a feeble light concerning the eternal verities of the gospel. All the Indians admit the existence of the Great Spirit, viz., of a Supreme Being who governs all the important affairs of life, and who manifests his action in the most ordinary events. They have no correct notion of the immutability of God. They think they can obtain his favors in the accomplishment of their projects, whatever be their nature, by presents, corporeal macerations, penances, fasts, etc. Thus every spring, at the first peal of thunder, which they call the *voice of the Great Spirit, speaking from the clouds,* the Assiniboins offer it sacrifices;—some burn tobacco, and present to the Great Spirit the most exquisite pieces of buffalo meat, by casting them into the fire; while others make deep incisions in the fleshy parts of their bodies, and even cut off the first joints of their fingers, to offer them in sacrifice. Thunder, next to the sun, is their Great Wah-kon. They hear it, and after a storm they sometimes perceive the effects of the lightning on the trees, on their horses and on man; hence it is an object of dread, and they endeavor to appease it.

It is rare that, during the course of a year, a family is not visited by some calamity; — disease; death, either natural or at the hands of their foes; the loss of their horses, their richest treasure, by robbery; finally, the scarcity of game, which condemns them to rigorous fasts and sometimes even to famine. At the least misfortune the father of a family presents the calumet to the Great Spirit, and, in prayer, implores him to take pity on him, his wives and children. He promises to give him a part of all he possesses at the first peal of thunder in the spring. When it is practicable, the various camps collect as soon as winter is over, to offer their gifts and sacrifices in union. This is the religious ceremony *par excellence*. The Assiniboins attach the highest importance to it. They often speak of it in the course of the year, and look forward to its immediate arrival with joy, respect and veneration. Sometimes three or four hundred lodges or families assemble in one locality. One sole individual is named the high priest, and directs all the ceremonies of the festival. A species of hall is constructed, with about thirty lodges, of skins of the buffalo. Each lodge is composed of twenty or twenty-four skins, stretched over a number of posts, seven or eight feet high. On the top of these posts several hundred poles are fastened, and on these each family hangs the articles that it intends to offer in sacrifice. These consist of skins of animals, richly embroidered with porcelain or glass beads, adorned with feathers of every hue; many-colored collars, clothes and ornaments of all kinds, making a rich and varied great Indian exhibition. Opposite to this hall, which is called the Great Medicine Lodge, they raise a high pole, to which all the chiefs and braves hang their medicine bags, containing the idols, their arrows, quivers, trophies won from their enemies, especially scalps. This pole is a tree, stripped of its bark and thirty or forty feet high. Men, women and children, in a spirit of religion, join in raising and planting it, amid the acclamations of the tribe.

After these preliminaries, the ceremony begins with a harangue and a prayer to the Great Spirit by the high priest. He implores him to accept their gifts, to take pity on them, protect them against sickness, accidents and misfortunes of all kinds, and to give them a plenteous hunt, plenty of bison, stag, deer, bighorns, wild-goat, etc., and to aid them in their wars and excursions against their enemies. Then he offers the calumet to the Great Spirit, to the sun, to each of the four cardinal points, to the water and the land, with words analogous to the benefits which they obtain from each. The sacred calumet is then passed to all the chiefs and warriors, who draw two or three whiffs of smoke, which each puffs out toward heaven, at the same time elevating the pipe. The day finishes with the great "medicine dance," and a variety of dances in honor of the animals which I have named. In these last they try to imitate, as much as possible, the cries and movements of those animals. Men alone perform this dance.

The second day is devoted to representations; that is, the jugglers, or medicine men, perform their tricks. Some of these men succeed in imposing on these simple and credulous souls, who discover the supernatural in everything that they do not understand: this is *great or little Wah-kon,* as it is more or less incomprehensible. Most of these representations are mere feats of legerdemain, which would scarcely excite a smile of mirth or the least astonishment in a circle of civilized persons. During their execution the men and women accompany the jugglers in a kind of chant, which consists of words analogous to the feast, but it is difficult to define what they say, amid their modulations of tone.

The third day is consumed in dances and banquets, in which all can participate. It is highly amusing to witness this spectacle. Among the meats, dogs are particularly numerous — little and big, roasted and boiled, whole or *en appalas;* these form the principal viands of the great religious banquet. Dishes of other meats, with roots, corn, wheat, sugar, etc., are added. All the pots and kettles of the whole tribe, of every form and dimension, are placed over a long row of fires. The braves distribute these meats with admirable order, giving to each one his share. These portions disappear with truly wonderful celerity.

The Assiniboins have two kinds of dances for this feast. Most of them dance some rounds for amusement, and leave the circle when they choose; but a band of young men form the great religious dance, and make a vow to the thunder, or voice of the Great Spirit. Then they perform various dances, which last three whole days and nights, with only slight intervals, without their taking the least nourishment or refreshment. I have this from a credible eye-witness. This extraordinary act is penitential, or rather propitiatory, to obtain from the Great Spirit success in war. All the garments and articles prepared during the winter, from the embroidered leggin and moccasin to the eagle-plumed head-piece, adorn their bodies for the first time, and the whole assembly appears quite brilliant; the camp acquires a new life. Those who are not at the moment occupied in the religious observances spend their time in games and often very spirited conversation. The feast lasts about ten days. Before separating, each person tears or cuts the article which he sacrificed, so that no one can be tempted to take possession of it. This last act performed, the different companies separate to their own hunting grounds.

They have some other religious practices and ceremonies, which I observed on my visit, and which are curious enough to be noticed here.

The sun is honored and worshipped by the greater number of the Indian tribes as the author of light and heat. The Assiniboins consider it likewise to be the favorite residence of the Master of Life. They evidence a great respect and veneration for the sun, but rarely address it. On great occasions they offer it their prayers and supplications, but only in a low tone. Whenever they light the calumet, they offer the sun the first whiffs of its smoke.

The Indians regard a solar eclipse as the forerunner of some great disaster; and if a juggler can ascertain from a white man the period of the arrival of an eclipse, he is sure to make use of it to display his Wah-kon, or supernatural knowledge. At the moment of the eclipse the Indians rush out of their lodges, armed in full. They fire their guns, discharge their arrows in the air, and shout and howl, in order to frighten and put to flight the enemy of the Master of Life. Their pretended success is followed by great rejoicings.

The bear is the terror of all American Indians, for he causes the most serious accidents, and is excessively dangerous, if he be encountered in a thick forest. Every year some savage is killed or crippled in a fight with a bear. They address it prayers and invocations; they offer it sacrifices of tobacco, belts and other esteemed objects; they celebrate feasts in its honor, to obtain its favors and live without accident. A bear's head is often preserved in the camp for several days, mounted in some suitable position, and adorned with scraps of scarlet cloth and trimmed with a variety of necklaces, collars and colored feathers. Then they offer it the calumet, and ask that they may be able to kill every bear they meet, without accident to themselves, in order to anoint themselves with his fine grease and make a banquet of his tender flesh.

The wolf is also more or less honored among the Indians. Most of the women refuse to dress its skin, at any price. The only reason that I could discover for this freak is that the wolves sometimes get mad, bite those they meet and give them the hydrophobia. It is, doubtless, to escape this terrible disease and to avoid the destruction of their game, that the Indians make him presents and offer him supplications and prayers. In other cases he is little feared. He seldom injures men, but is formidable to the animals, and makes great ravages among them, especially among bison calves, kids, deer, antelopes, hares, etc.

The "little medicine-wolf" [coyote] is in great veneration among the Assiniboins. He ordinarily approaches the camp during the night. As soon as an Indian hears his barks, he counts the number with care; he remarks whether his voice is feeble or strong, and from what point of the compass it comes. These observations then become the subject of discussion to the jugglers. What are the prognostics? Why, the "little medicine-wolf" announces to them that on the morrow they may expect a visit from a friend or from an enemy, or perhaps a herd of buffalo. The Indians frequently regulate their movements or marches by these indications; and if, as occasionally happens, they result according to the explanation of the barks, the little wolf is favored with the ceremony of a grand feast!

The belief in ghosts is very profound, and common in all these tribes. Indians have often told me, seriously, that they had met, seen and conversed with them, and that they may be heard almost every night in the places where the dead are interred. They say they speak in a kind of whistling tone. Sometimes they contract the face like a person in an epileptic fit. Nothing but the hope of gain could ever induce an Indian to go alone in a burying-ground at night. In such a case, love of gain might triumph over the fear of ghosts; but an Indian woman would never be induced, on any condition, to enter one.

The Assiniboins esteem greatly a religious custom of assembling once or twice in the year around the tombs of their immediate relatives. These sepulchres are raised on a species of scaffold, about seven or eight feet above the surface of the soil. The Indians call the dead by their names, and offer them meats carefully dressed, which they place beside them. They take care, however, to consume the best pieces themselves,— after the custom of the priests of the idols of old, who offered their false gods the heart, blood, entrails and indigestible parts, reserving to themselves the most delicate portions of the victim. The ceremony of burying the dead, among the Indians, is terminated by the tears, wailings, howlings and macerations of all present. They tear the hair, gash their legs, and at last the calumet is lighted, for this is the Alpha and Omega of every rite. They offer it to the shades of the departed and entreat them not to injure the living. During their ceremonious repasts, in their excursions, and even at a great distance from their tombs, they send to the dead puffs of tobacco-smoke and burn little pieces of meat as a sacrifice in their memory.

The religious worship of the Assiniboins embraces a great variety of practices too lengthy to recount — they all bear the same characteristics. I will add, however, one remarkable point. Each savage who considers himself a chief or warrior, possesses what he calls his Wah-kon, in which he appears to place all his confidence. This consists of a stuffed bird, a weasel's skin, or some little bone or the tooth of an animal; sometimes it is a little stone, or a fantastical figure, represented by little beads or by a coarsely painted picture. These charms or talismans accompany them on all their expeditions, for war or hunting—they never lay them aside. In every difficulty or peril they invoke the protection and assistance of their Wah-kon, as though these idols could really preserve them from all misfortunes. If any accident befalls an idol or charm, if it is broken or lost, it is enough to arrest the most intrepid chief or warrior in his expedition, and make him abandon the most important enterprise in which he may be engaged. It is true that they have a conviction that all assistance should come from the Great Spirit; but as they can neither see nor touch him, they invoke him through their favorite tutelary idols. If it happen (though the case is very rare) that an individual should profess not to believe in any kind of Wah-kon, he is regarded among the Indians very much as an infidel or an atheist would be in a Catholic country. They point at him and avoid him. In regard to the future state, they believe that the souls of the dead migrate toward the south, where the climate is mild, the game abundant and the rivers well stocked with fish. Their hell is the reverse of this picture; its unfortunate inmates dwell in perpetual snow and ice, and in the complete deprivation of all things. There are, however, many among them who think death is the cessation of life and action, and that there is naught beyond it. As they feel uncertain which is true, they seem to attach no great importance to either. They seldom speak of it; they manifest their views to those whites who inquire of them, and in whom they feel confidence.

The moral principles of the Assiniboins are few in number. Their opinions concerning good and evil have little precision. Social position is respected among them to a certain degree. Fear, on almost every occasion, governs and determines the conduct of the Indian. If he has any ground to suspect that another intends to take his life, he seizes the earliest opportunity of killing that person, provided he can do so without endangering his own life. This case is not looked upon as murder, but as a justifiable self-defense. The crime of murder, properly so called, is not known among them. They never kill, except in quarrels, to avenge or to defend themselves, and custom with them justifies the act. To behave otherwise, according to their received views, would be regarded as an act of folly.

Theft, among the Assiniboins, is only considered disgraceful when it is discovered; then shame and infamy are attached rather to the awkwardness of the thief for having taken his measures so ill. The old women are acknowledged the most adroit thieves in the country; nevertheless, it is only just to add that the men seldom omit stealing any object, if it can prove useful to them.

Adultery is punished with death in almost every case. The seducer seldom escapes, if the husband and his family have the power and the courage to execute this law. Hence this crime is rather uncommon. The woman is sometimes killed, but always severely punished. The husband causes her head to be closely shaved, and her person painted over with a heavy coat of vermilion mixed with bear's grease; she is then mounted on a horse, the mane and tail of which have been cut off, and the whole body also daubed with vermilion; an old man conducts her all around the camp and proclaims aloud her infidelity; at last he commits her to the hands of her own relatives, who receive the culprit with a good beating. A woman cannot be subjected to a more degrading punishment.

An Assiniboin has no scruple in lying, when he can obtain any advantage from it: he rarely tells falsehoods in jest. In regard to theft, falsehood and adultery, the Assiniboins differ from the Indians near the Rocky Mountains, especially the Flatheads and the Pend d'Oreilles, who detest these vices. It may be observed that the Assiniboins have been in relations with the whites for many years.

False oaths are very rare among the Indians, when their promises are assumed with any solemnity. The objects by which the Assiniboin swears are his gun, the skin of the rattlesnake, a bear's claw, and the Wah-kon of the Indian interrogated. These various articles are placed before him, and he says, "In case my declaration prove false, may my gun fire and kill me, may the serpent bite me, may the bears tear and devour my flesh, may my Wah-kon overwhelm me with misery." A circumstance in which perjury could save his life, is the only one in which a savage would be tempted to commit it. In extraordinary and very important affairs, which demand formal promises, they call upon the thunder to witness their resolution of accomplishing the articles proposed and accepted. The whole vocabulary of the Assiniboin and Sioux language contains but one single word which can be considered insulting or as blasphemous. This word expresses the wish that the person or thing in question may become ugly, as we would say in French "Le Monstre," or in Flemish "Gy leelyke beest." The name of the Great Spirit is never pronounced in vain, but always with highest marks of veneration. In this respect the language of the poor Indian is more noble than the more polished tongues of many civilized nations, where there are ever on the swearer's lips curses and blasphemies, and where men mingle in all their conversation the name of the Almighty! Such an individual would not only excite horror in the Indian, but would even excite his terror.

The Sioux, or Dakotas, of whom the Assiniboins are a branch, pretend that thunder is an enormous bird, and that the muffled sound of the distant thunder is caused by a countless number of young birds! The great bird, they say, gives the first sound, and the young ones repeat it: this is the cause of the reverberations. The Sioux declare that the young thunders do all the mischief, like giddy youth, who will not listen to good advice; but the old thunder, or big bird, is wise and excellent, he never kills or injures any one!

The Assiniboins dread vampires and bats. Should these fly near a man, it is an omen of evil. The Will-with-a-wisp is also a great terror to them. The man who sees one during the night is certain that death is about to carry away some cherished member of his family.

They believe in dreams. According to them, good dreams come from a spirit that loves them and desires to give them good advice; bad dreams, in particular the nightmare, render them sad and melancholy, and lead them to dread the arrival of painful events.

Not a day passes in an Indian family without some one having seen or heard something that augurs evil. This always excites an anxiety; hence their superstitions become a kind of torment.

I have the honor to be, etc.

P. S.— I hope to send you in a few days some account of Indian hunts and especially of a great bison hunt made by the Assiniboins in a kind of inclosure or park. If possible, I will add a sketch to enable you to understand what I try to describe.

The thermometer stands here at 96° and even 102°. I am afraid my style shows it. The heat is so excessive that several persons have fallen dead in the streets.

I hope you have received my itinerary, my letter on our shipwreck on the *Humboldt*, and the address sent me by Crazy Bear, the Assiniboin chief. Please acknowledge receipt of my letters.

CHAPTER II.

NOTES ON THE BLACKFEET.

Religion in the wilderness — Savagery of the Blackfeet — Hopes for them — Dismal outlook for the buffalo tribes — Subdivisions of the Blackfeet — Piegans learning their prayers — Inequality of sexes — Superstitions in regard to Black-robes — Horse-stealing — Improvement in baptized wives.

Fort Lewis, Sept. 27, 1846.

Reverend and very dear Father in Jesus Christ:[1]

I HAVE been at Fort Lewis three days, and am resting a little from my long and roundabout horseback ride from St. Francis Xavier of the Willamette to this place; in the course of which I had to visit our three mountain Réductions and the Flathead camp on the Yellowstone. If my stay here is very helpful to me, it is not less so to the occupants of the fort, who are for the most part Catholics. I have so arranged my time as to be able to talk with them all successively of the truths of our holy religion; to urge and encourage them to discharge the duties that it prescribes. These poor Canadians and French Creoles often remain ten, twelve or fifteen years in the desert, without priest, without instruction, exposed to the greatest dangers of body and soul. A great number of those whom I have known have found a tragic end there.

To-day, Sunday, I have offered the holy sacrifice of the mass, followed by an instruction upon the end of man. All the white men of the fort and a large number of Blackfeet were present. Tears of joy and of compunction flowed from the eyes of the Canadian, the Creole and the Spaniard, at the recollection no doubt of the innocent and happy days of their childhood, when the pious hand of a mother led them to the foot of the altar, and when later they practiced regularly their religious duties.

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[1] Letter XXV, *Missions de l'Orégon* here translated for the first time.

They made good and pious resolutions on this occasion, and the emotion that they showed during the divine service gave evidence that the germ of faith, so long sterile at the bottom of their hearts, would blossom and bring forth fruits of salvation there by the practice of the Christian virtues. Toward evening, I baptized thirty children with all the ceremonies of the ritual.

From all that I have seen and heard of the Blackfeet, during the five weeks I have spent among them, I am firmly convinced that a mission to this tribe would produce results very fortunate and very consoling for the religion. It is assuredly a task full of difficulties and obstacles, requiring the zeal and courage of an apostle; one must be prepared for a life of crosses, privation and patience; they are savages in the full meaning of the word, accustomed to wreak vengeance on their enemies and wallow in blood and carnage. They are plunged in coarse superstitions which brutalize their souls; they worship the sun and moon and offer them sacrifices of propitiation and thanksgiving. Now they cut deep gashes in their bodies and catch the blood; now they strike off joints of their fingers and present them to their divinities, crying: "I do thee this favor, Apistotokio (God, Spirit), I give thee my blood; do me also a favor on the war-path, and when I come again I will worship thee with scalps that I take from my enemies."

Despite their cruelties and abominable superstitions, a bright light is beginning, it would seem, to dispel the shadows under which these poor pagans have lived for so many ages.[2] * * * During the five weeks that I stayed among them, they were as assiduous and attentive as possible to the instructions I gave them, and seemed to listen with pleasure to the consoling truths of the gospel.

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[2] Omitted portion is a letter of Father Point's.

Permit me, Reverend Father, to express to you my uneasiness as to the probable future lot of these unhappy tribes; it is becoming more alarming day by day. What future awaits them? The plains where the buffalo graze are becoming more and more of a desert, and at every season's hunt the different Indian tribes find themselves closer together. It is probable that the plains of the Yellowstone and Missouri and as far as the forks of the Saskatchewan, occupied to-day by the Blackfeet, will be within the next dozen years the last retreat of the buffalo. Will there be enough of these wild animals to feed the hundred thousand Indians of this region? The Crees, the Assiniboins, the Snakes, the Bannocks, the Crows, the Blackfeet, the Aricaras and the Sioux are drawing nearer to these plains each year; whenever they meet, it is war to the death. These meetings must naturally become more frequent, and it is to be feared that the last of the buffalo may be disputed in a last fight between the unfortunate remnants of these unhappy tribes. What can be done to prevent such great misfortunes? A sincere and effective protection on the part of the United States Government against everything that could be harmful to the natives, would be required. Very severe laws have been enacted against those who supply the Indians with liquor; it is to be hoped that they may be firmly executed; it is a great step in favor of the savages. Let those who have the power and the means look to it in time. Let some efforts be made to rescue them from the threatened destruction, lest, by guilty negligence, the last drop of aboriginous blood indelibly stain the fair fame of the Government under whose protecting wing they are said to live. Justice makes the appeal. Oh! it would be the height of spiritual and temporal good fortune for these tribes, to grant them some zealous, fervent, courageous missionaries; they would teach them to know and to serve God, while at the same time they would initiate them into the labors and the arts which would procure them necessary, useful and agreeable things. And their mortal hatred of the race which has never ceased thrusting them farther back and despoiling them, would change to feelings of gratitude and good will.

In closing this letter, permit me, Reverend Father, to recommend to you in an especial manner the salvation of the Indians in your holy sacrifices, and believe me, with the profoundest respect and most sincere esteem,

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University of St. Louis, Oct. 28, 1855.

Reverend and Dear Father:[3]

In some of my letters of 1846, I spoke of my visit to the Blackfeet. I sojourned among the four tribes, the Grosventres, Piegans,[4] Bloods, and Blackfeet[5] proper, about six weeks, and had the happiness of regenerating in the holy waters of baptism several hundred children and some adults. In the month of October, after having bid adieu to Father Point, who proposed passing the winter in the Indian camps, in order to sound further their dispositions in a religious point of view, I left the country of the Blackfeet in order to repair to St. Louis, where the affairs of the missions were awaiting me. During the residence of Father Point among those Indian populations, he collected many interesting traits concerning the character and manners of the savages; he had the kindness to communicate them to me. I sent a copy of his relation to our superiors in Europe; but I do not think it has ever been published. In the hope that it will afford you pleasure, and that it will prove worthy of your attention, I transmit to you some of the principal extracts. In 1847, Father Point wrote me:

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[3] Letter to F. Terwecoren, Editor *Précis Historiques*, published as Letter of the *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres* and translated thence as Letter XVIII, *Western Missions and Missionaries*. The latter text is here followed.

[4] The tribe of the Piegans forms a portion of the six tribes known by the generic name of Blackfeet. The other five are the Blackfeet, properly so called, the Men of Blood, the Sarcees, the Little Robes, and the Grosventres.— *Note by Father De Smet.*

[5] The Blackfeet are divided into five principal tribes (about 16,000 souls) — the Piegans, the Bloods, the Blackfeet Direct, the Sarcees and the Grosventres of the Plains. The Sarcees and Grosventres speak a distinct language, entirely different from that of the other three Blackfoot tribes. The Sarcees tell that their ancestors only came to the plains after having wandered for a long time upon an immense lake, at the mercy of the winds and floods. The Grosventres speak the same language as the Arapahos, who live on the south fork of the Platte and of [?] the Arkansas river, 1,200 miles from the plains where they dwell to-day, and whither their ancestors withdrew in consequence of a quarrel.— *Note by Father Point.*

"I think I can say, to the glory of the only Author of all Good, that with his grace I have not lost my time among the Blackfeet. I have performed 667 baptisms, the records of which are in due form; I have taken notes of whatsoever appeared to me suitable for interesting the curious or edifying the pious. During the winter I was accustomed, daily, to give three instructions, or catechetical lessons, proportioned to the three very different classes of my auditors. It is unnecessary for me to say that the prayers have all been translated into Blackfoot, and learned in Fort Lewis and in the camp of the Piegans, and there is scarcely any camp among the Blackfeet in which the sign of the cross is not held in veneration, and even practiced, at least among those individuals who have had any intercourse with the missionary.

"Of the twenty-five or thirty camp-leaders, or chiefs, who visited me or whom I have visited, there is not one who has not given me ideas of his people or tribe less disadvantageous than those generally entertained, and of course among the whites who inhabit the Indian Territory as elsewhere. Among the different camps, there is a species of emulation as to which shall have the Black-robe, or rather the mission, on its lands. Concerning this article I have decided nothing. I have only said that in case a Réduction were formed, it would be built in the position or locality which would afford the greatest advantages to all the tribes, taken collectively. All found this idea reasonable, and have promised that they would exert their utmost endeavors to satisfy the Black-robes.

"The Grosventres of the Plains appear to me to have the advantage over the others, in being more adroit, docile and courageous; but they are more strongly attached to their old superstitions, and are terrible *demandeurs,* as the Canadian employees here call shameless beggars: happily, they are not offended when refused. The Piegans are the most civilized, but the most noted thieves. The Gens du Sang are well made, of fine blood, and generally less dirty. It is said that the Blackfeet proper are the most hospitable.

"Such are the most striking traits of these four nations, so long at war with almost all their neighbors, and sometimes among themselves, at least partially. Since they have had the proof that the true prayer renders man more valiant, happier, and generally tends to make him live longer (three advantages which they exalt above all others, and which they believe they perceive united in the Flatheads), the medicine-sack, or idolatry, with many, is falling into discredit.

"Several traits of divine justice, against those who have shown themselves less docile in following our counsels, and, on the contrary, several striking evidences of protection, in favor of those who followed them, have contributed greatly to work an admirable change in their ideas. By that, I do not mean to pronounce them saints: no; theft and assassination are not yet, in the eyes of the young particularly, destitute of attractions. For this reason, notwithstanding the peace concluded with the Flatheads, and the inclination of the great men to maintain it, there were many depredations committed during the winter, to the detriment of the latter. But let it be said to the praise of the chiefs, the whole was disapproved by them. Nine or ten thieves have received their deserts from the Pend d'Oreilles. This pacification, so desirable, under the double relation of humanity and social commerce, is the condition, *sine qua non*, of the conversion of the greater part of those poor Indians, unless God is pleased to work a miracle, which rarely has happened, except among the Flatheads.

"I have been on a six weeks' hunt with the fifty lodges of the Piegans, which are under the command of the chief, Amakzikinne, or 'Big Lake.' This camp is one of the seven or eight fractions of the Piegan tribe, amounting in all to about 300 lodges. This tribe forms a part of the four, known under the generic title of Blackfeet. I have spoken of them already. The Piegans are the most civilized, on account of the relations of a portion of their people with the Flatheads. If the Grosventres were less importunate, I would willingly entitle them the Flatheads of the Missouri. They have something of their simplicity and their bravery. They are improperly ranked among the Blackfeet: besides that they did not originate in the country, they do not speak their language, and are different in many respects.

"However this may be, these four tribes may contain about 1,000 lodges or 10,000 souls. This is not half what they were, before the contagion of smallpox introduced among them by the whites. I believe that women constitute more than two-thirds of them, if not even three-quarters. This inequality, so baneful to morals, is the result of war. In the visit that I paid to the Grosventres, divided into two camps, I counted 230 lodges. I visited, or received visits from, several fractions or detachments of Blackfeet, and further, an entire camp of Gens du Sang; and all were in such dispositions, that only a word on my part would have been necessary to enable me to baptize, with their consent, all the children from the largest down to those of only a day old, which the mothers brought me of their own free will. I could have baptized a great number of adults; they even seemed to desire it ardently; but these desires were not yet sufficiently imbued with the true principles of religion. I could not content myself with the persuasion generally existing among the savages, that when they have received baptism they can conquer any enemy whatsoever. The courage and the happiness of the Flatheads have inspired them with this belief. This explains why some wretches, who seek only to kill their neighbors, were the first to petition for baptism.

"All say that they would be glad to have black-gowns; but why do the greater part desire them? Because they think that all other imaginable blessings will come with them; not only courage to fight, but also every species of remedy to enable them to enjoy corporeal health. The Grosventres conducted to me a hump-backed person and a near-sighted person that I might heal them. I said that this kind of cures surpassed my abilities; which did not, however, hinder them from making other similar requests. But at last, by continually repeating to them, that the Black-robes can heal souls, but not always the body, some at last believe me. They believe also that we can excite diseases and cause the thunder to roll when we are not satisfied. Quite recently, there was an earthquake in the land of the Grosventres, and directly the report was spread abroad that I was the cause of the earth's trembling; and that this shock was an indication that the smallpox was about to return into the country, etc., and all this happened because the Indians did not give attention sufficient to the discourse of the Black-robe. There is at present a malady raging among the Piegans, said to be mortal, and which indeed has proved fatal to a few persons. As this disease begins in the ear, they consider themselves more justified than the Grosventres, in saying 'that this punishment arrived to them on account of their hardness of heart,' in listening to the words of the Great Spirit. For myself, what appeared most striking was the sudden death of a dozen of persons, stricken down either in their lodges or in war, but at the moment that they were straying most widely from the right path. One of these, belonging to the Blackfeet, had robbed me of three mules; he died on the morrow after his arrival home, and after finding himself divested of his capture, which were conducted back to me. This death was certain to provoke the saying: 'Woe to him who robs the Black-robes!' Thus in one way or another Almighty God is preparing the way for the conversion of these poor idolaters.

"To return to the Piegans, with whom I have lived about six weeks, I will observe that those who, among the savages, call themselves 'Great Men,' would be disposed to listen wholly to us, could we but make terms with them on the article of plurality of wives; that the youth, in their turn, would as cheerfully, if we could immediately make 'Great Men' of them; but this being scarcely possible, all the reasonings of the wise can with difficulty induce them to refrain from robbery. If they can rob adroitly and in large value from the enemies of their nation, they never fail to do it; but if the theatre of their legitimate thefts is too remote, it is not rare to find them seeking among friendly tribes (for example, the Pend d'Oreilles or the Flatheads) what would prove too troublesome to seek elsewhere. A few days since, the three brothers of Big Lake, to one of whom the Flatheads have three times granted life, came with two good and handsome horses taken from the Pend d'Oreilles, who had just spared the lives of two of their youth. Already twice before, after similar misdeeds, Big Lake, notwithstanding my strong remonstrances, had not the courage to blame them. Among the Blackfeet, the rich people, who undertake to rebuke the wicked who possess nothing, have naught to gain and all to lose. As there is neither lawful authority on one side nor conscience on the other, a second theft, or a musket-shot, is not rare.

"In these thefts, however, there is one thing which excuses, to a certain degree, the silence of the chief of whom I have just spoken; it is the robbery of two horses to his detriment committed by a young Flathead; but this precedent cannot certainly justify the reprisals; for, besides restitution having been promised to him, he knew well that the thief in question was an outcast from his tribe; that he ought not to imitate him; that he was only to follow the example of the good, who were all desirous of dwelling in peace with the Blackfeet, etc. But in vain we instruct them and refresh their memories, we discover that these reasons enter their minds with difficulty, and still less their hearts, which have neither the uprightness nor the generosity of their allies. Aside from these miseries, and some false maxims derived from the whites, the remainder, and even the very efforts of hell to resume a prey which is escaping her, all that is accomplishing at this moment in this country announces that the day of its regeneration is not remote. What most consoles us is that this regeneration, if things continue, will be due, in great measure, to the present exemplary conduct at the fort.

"Every day after mass, I teach the children their prayers; every evening the men recall them to memory mutually; at six o'clock in the evening these recite their prayers in common in my own room, after which I give them an instruction; then comes the turn of the women. Now, these women, baptized and lawfully married, or preparing for baptism and marriage, oblige their husbands to say (the latter having almost all approached the sacraments): 'What a change! what a difference!' In fact, this difference is so sensible, that it is obvious to all the savages who come in throngs to the fort, and do not return without coming to assure me, 'that they also wish to learn and follow the way to heaven, since it is only in that path and in heaven that real happiness is found.' What are their narrations when they return to their families? New visitors, better disposed than ever in regard to the fort and on the subject of prayer, easily make known.

"I have yet one consoling piece of news to announce. On my route, traveling with the Piegan camp, I baptized fourteen little infants of the Crow nation, so well did I find them disposed — these were on their way to visit the Gros-ventres. They desire to see you among them again. Indulging this hope, they will go to meet you in the spring.

At a distance, as when present, Reverend Father, I shall never cease to offer devout and heartfelt petitions for the success of an enterprise, to which it has pleased divine Providence to associate me from its commencement. It will always be allowable for me to do by prayers, what I cannot effect by my works.

"I am, etc.,

"N. POINT, S. J."

The project of going to these poor Indians has never been abandoned. Every returning spring they send pressing invitations to the Black-robes to come and establish themselves among them, in order to be taught the way of the Lord. During the current year, we have received invitations from the Blackfeet, the Crows, the Assiniboins, the Sioux, Poncas, and Omahas, with many other tribes; the number of these Indians surpasses 70,000. A great number of infants and adults have received baptism. The vast wilderness that they occupy boasts not a single priest at this moment! For fifteen years they have been begging for pastors!

Allow me, Reverend Father, to request the aid of your prayer and holy sacrifices, and deign to commend the poor Indians to the kind remembrance of the pious souls of your acquaintance, that the Lord may condescend to hear these unhappy men, and send good pastors into this widespread vineyard, so long neglected, but which promises such a glorious harvest.

In union with your devout petitions and holy sacrifices, I have the honor to be, with the most profound respect and highest esteem,

Your very devoted servant, etc.

CHAPTER III.

THE OREGON INDIANS.

Fidelity and zeal of the Skalzi — Their territory — Agriculture — Loss of tools by burning of boat — Ideal Indians — Building a church — Father Menetrey — Chief Michael — Unregenerate dogs — A presbytery — How Father De Smet brought the fighting chiefs down to Fort Vancouver — The winter's work — Prejudices removed — Feeds and shelters the chiefs — Kamiakin's statement — His poverty — Gerry, Schloom and Telgawax — Sketch of Eastern Washington — Opinion as to reservations — Some other recommendations.

St. Louis University, Dec. 1, 1861.

Dear Sir:[1]

IN my letter of November 10, 1859, I alluded to the Skalzi Indians. Allow me to add fuller details concerning that tribe.

I visited these good savages for the first time in the summer of 1845, on which occasion I had the happiness to regenerate all their little children in the holy waters of baptism, as well as a large number of adults. I saw these dear children again in 1859; and the visit filled me with inexpressible joy, because they had remained faithful, true to the faith, and fervent and zealous Christians. They were the consolation of their missionaries, and shone conspicuous by their virtues among the tribes of the Rocky Mountains. They were especially distinguished by an admirable simplicity, a great charity, and a rare honesty in all their dealings with their neighbors, and an innocence of manners worthy of the primitive Christians. A short account of this interesting tribe and the country which they inhabit, will doubtless please you.

The two tribes of the Kootenais and the Flat-bows number over 1,000 souls. They are principally divided into two camps, and are known in their country under the name of Skalzi. One of these camps, numbering about 300, inhabits sometimes the neighborhood of the great Flathead lake, and sometimes the great Tobacco Plain, which is watered by the Kootenai river; the distance is seventy miles. The Tobacco Plain is a remarkable spot, situated between the forty-ninth and fiftieth degrees of north latitude, and is the only great plain possessed by this camp. It it about fifty or sixty miles long by fifteen or twenty miles in width. It resembles a large basin, surrounded by lofty mountains, which form a vast and beautiful amphitheatre and present a picturesque sight. The plain has all the appearance of the dry bed of a vast lake. Toward the south the valley is gravelly, undulating and covered with little hillocks, and patches here and there are susceptible of cultivation; the northern portion, on the contrary, has a uniform surface and a considerable extent of excellent arable land.

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[1] Unaddressed letter, published in *New Indian Sketches*, pp. 104-117.

Though the land is very elevated, and far toward the north, the temperature is remarkably mild, severe cold being a rare occurrence, and the snow is seldom deep; it falls frequently during the season, but disappears almost as it falls, absorbed, perhaps, by the rarefaction of the atmosphere at this elevation, or perhaps driven off by the southern breeze, which blows almost uninterruptedly in the valley and drives the snow off as it falls. Horses and horned cattle find abundant pasture during the whole year.

The large river, called indifferently the Kootenai, the McGillivray, and the Flat-bow river, flows through the entire valley. It rises to the northwest of this region, and its course is toward the southeast for a considerable distance. The waters of this great river are increased by a large number of brooks and beautiful rivulets, which have their source, for the most part, in the lovely lakes or numerous basins of these beautiful mountains. Many of these streams present to the eye the most charming scenes in their course. The noise of their waters and the sweet murmur of their falls are heard at some distance, and the eye is charmed by their descent from height after height, and their succession of cascades, from which they escape to the plain, covered with foam, and, as it were, exhausted by the struggles of the way. These mountain torrents will some day be the sites of mills of every description. Coal exists in many portions of the country, lead is found in abundance, and I venture to say that more precious minerals repose in the bosom of the mountains, and will one day be brought to light there.

The Indians have devoted themselves to agriculture for some years past. They cultivate little fields of maize, barley, oats and potatoes, all of which ripen. It is rare that the frost injures the crops before the season of harvest. Their small fields cannot be extended, owing to the want of instruments of agriculture. They are compelled to turn the earth with instruments of the most primitive construction, such as Adam may have used in his day. The pointed stick made of a very hard wood is what they have used from ages immemorial to dig up the *camas,* the bitter-root, the *wappatoo* (*sagittafolia*), the *caious,* or biscuit-root, and other vegetables of the same description. These Indians are very industrious. They are rarely unemployed. Their time is fully occupied in making bows and arrows, lines and hooks, or in hunting and fishing, or seeking roots or wild fruits for their numerous families. They extend their hunt often to the great plains of the Blackfeet and the Crows, to the east of the Rocky Mountains, on the upper waters of the Missouri and the Saskatchewan. Deprived as they are of agricultural instruments and fire-arms, they are always in want, and they may be said to keep a perpetual Lent.

The missionaries furnished them with a few plows and spades. Last year I forwarded to them, by the steamer of the Missouri Fur Company at St. Louis, some necessary agricultural implements, such as plows, etc.; but the boat was burned with all her cargo above the Yellowstone river.[3]

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[3] The *Chippewa,* May, 1861, near the mouth of Poplar river.

It is much to be regretted that no more can be done for these good Indians, for, of all the mountain tribes, they are at once the best disposed and the most necessitous. The beau-ideal of the Indian character, uncontaminated by contact with the whites, is found among them. What is most pleasing to the stranger, is to see their simplicity, united with sweetness and innocence, keep step with the most perfect dignity and modesty of deportment. The gross vices which dishonor the red man on the frontiers, are utterly unknown among them. They are honest to scrupulosity. The Hudson Bay Company, during the forty years that it has been trading in furs with them, has never been able to perceive that the smallest object had been stolen from them. The agent of the Company takes his furs down to Colville every spring, and does not return before autumn. During his absence, the store is confided to the care of an Indian, who trades in the name of the Company, and on the return of the agent, renders him a most exact account of his trust. I repeat here what I stated in a preceding letter, that the store often remains without any one to watch it, the door unlocked and unbolted, and the goods are never stolen. The Indians go in and out, help themselves to what they want, and always scrupulously leave in place of whatever article they take its exact value.

The following anecdote will serve to give an idea of the delicacy of conscience of these good Indians.

An old chief, poor and blind, came from a great distance, guided by his son, to consult the priest; his only object being to receive baptism, if he should be considered worthy of the privilege. He stated to the missionary that, in spite of his ardent desire to be baptized, he had not dared to approach the priest for that purpose, owing to a small debt of two beaver skins (say ten dollars) which he had contracted. "My poverty," said he, "has always prevented me from fulfilling this obligation; and until I had done so, I dared not gratify the dearest wish of my heart. At last I had a thought. I begged my friends to be charitable to me. I am now in possession of a fine buffalo robe: I wish to make myself worthy of baptism." The missionary, accompanied by the old man, went to the clerk of the Company to learn the particulars of the debt. The clerk examined the books, but said that no such debt existed. The chief still insisted on paying, but the clerk refused to take the robe. "Have pity on me," at last exclaimed the worthy old man, "this debt has rendered me wretched long enough; for years it has weighed on my conscience. I wish to belong to the blameless and pure prayer (religion), and to make myself worthy of the name of a child of God. This buffalo robe *covers* my debt," and he spread it on the ground at the feet of the clerk. He received baptism, and returned home contented and happy.

A young Kootenai who had been baptized in infancy, during my first visit in 1845, had emigrated with his parents to the Shooswaps in the mountainous regions near Fraser river. His parents desired to marry him to a young woman who was as yet unbaptized; he had a sister in the same condition. It was resolved that the three should make the long journey of many weeks' travel, to reach the Mission, in order that both sacraments might be received. On their arrival, their ardent faith and praiseworthy earnestness were the admiration of the whole village. The fervent missionary, Father Menetrey,[3] instructed these zealous neophytes and prepared them for holy baptism. The young man, who had not seen a priest since 1845, had prepared himself to approach the tribunal of penance, for the first time, in order to make his first communion, and to receive the nuptial benediction with the proper dispositions. On the day appointed for the administration of all these sacraments, the young Kootenai presented himself with an humble and modest air at the confessional. He held in his hands some bundles of cedar chips, about the size of ordinary matches, and divided into small bunches of different sizes. After kneeling in the confessional and saying the Confiteor, he handled the little bundles to the priest. "These, my father," said he, "are the result of my examination of conscience. This bundle is such a sin: count the chips and you will know how many times I have committed it; the second bundle is such a sin," and so he continued his confession. His confession was accompanied with such sincere signs of grief, that his confessor was affected to tears. It is impossible not to be struck with admiration for the simplicity of heart which led our young savage, in his desire to perform this duty with the utmost exactitude, to this new method of making a confession; but still more admirable is the adorable grace of the Holy Ghost, who thus sheds his gifts upon these, his poor children of the desert, and, if I may dare to say so, adapts himself to their capacity.

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[3] Father Joseph Menetrey was born in Friburg, Switzerland, in 1812; came to America (Oregon by way of Cape Horn) in 1847; was occupied at various missions in the northwest at different times; he was Father Adrien Hoeken's colaborer in establishing the second (present) mission of St. Ignatius in 1854; succeeded him as local superior, and died there April 27, 1891.

In their zeal and fervor the Kootenais have built a little church of round logs on the great Tobacco Prairie. They carried the logs — which averaged from twenty to twenty-five feet in length — in their arms a distance of more than a quarter of a mile, and raised the walls of the new church, as it were, by main force. The exterior is covered with straw and sods. In this humble house of the Lord they meet morning and evening, to offer to the Great Spirit their fervent prayers — the first fruits of the day. How striking is the contrast between this little church of the desert and the magnificent temples of civilization, especially in Europe. The majesty of these churches, their fine pictures, the sculpture which adorns their walls, and their imposing proportions, inspire the beholder with admiration and awe: yet, on entering this little cabin, consecrated to the Great Spirit in the desert, erected by poor Indians — on contemplating the profound recollection, the sincere piety depicted on their features — on hearing them recite their prayers, which seem to rise from the bottom of their heart, it is difficult to refrain from tears, and the spectator exclaims: "Indeed, this poor and humble church is the abode of the Lord and the house of prayer; its whole beauty lies in the piety, zeal and fervor of those who enter there!"

In this humble church are now performed all the religious ceremonies of baptism and marriage. The Indians defer them until the appointed season for the arrival of the missionaries; they then come in from all parts of the country. "How beautiful are the feet of those who announce the gospel of peace." The priest of this mission finds the truth of the words, "*Jugum meum suave:* my yoke is sweet." No sooner has he arrived than all crowd round him, as beloved children to greet, after a long absence, a father whom they tenderly venerate. Even the hands of infants are placed in those of the missionary by their mothers. A long conference then follows. The priest gives and receives all news of important events which have happened since the last meeting, and regulates with the chiefs the exercises to be followed during his present visit. He gives two instructions a day to adults, and catechises the children; he helps them to examine well their consciences, and to make a good confession: he prepares them to approach worthily the holy table, instructs the catechumens and admits them to baptism, together with the children born during his absence; he renews and blesses all new marriages; and, like a father, settles any difficulties which may have arisen. Some he encourages and strengthens in the faith, and removes the doubts and soothes the inquietudes of others. In a word, he encourages all these good neophytes to know the Lord, to serve him faithfully, and love him with all their hearts.

If the days of the missionary are thus filled with labor and fatigue, he has his full recompense of merit and consolation. He counts them among the happiest days of his life. The Reverend Father Menetrey, their missionary, during his visit in 1858, baptized fifty children and thirty adults, blessed forty marriages, and heard over 500 confessions.

The great chief of the Kootenais, named Michael, recalls in the midst of his tribe the life and virtues of the ancient patriarchs. His life is that of a good and tender father, surrounded by a numerous family of docile and affectionate children. His camp numbers 400 souls. They are all baptized, and they walk in the footsteps of their worthy chief. It is truly a delightful spectacle to find in the bosom of these isolated mountains of the Columbia river, a tribe of poor Indians living in the greatest purity of manners, and leading a life of evangelic simplicity. They are almost deprived of the succors of religion, and receive the visit of a priest but once or twice in the course of a year.

The sleep of a missionary among the Indians is always deep. His entire day, and a great part of the night, is spent in instructing them and arranging the affairs of their conscience. When his work is done, his slumber is profound, and it is not surprising that he hears nothing that passes around him. I wish to add, at this point, a little chapter on the subject of Indian dogs. "*Experto crede Roberto.*"

Having had much experience in this matter myself, I give ready and implicit faith to the statement made to me by Father Menetrey, as to the conduct of the dogs of the Kootenais. It is the reverse side of his beautiful description of life among this tribe. All is not beauty and pleasure in this charming wilderness. It is well that travelers at a distance should be forewarned of what they may expect, that they may provide themselves for the occasion. If the traveler has only one tent, he must be careful before he retires to barricade the entrance well, and surround it with brush; he must stop every crack and cranny and carefully hang out of reach not only all his provisions, but anything made of leather, or that has once had connection with flesh, otherwise he will find on waking that himself and his cattle are deprived of provender. The Indian dogs are as bad as their masters are good. Their masters abhor theft, but these dogs make it their business, and subsist entirely by pilfering. The dogs are found to the number of six or seven in each family: each member owns one or two; they live on bones and the crumbs which fall from the frugal table of their poor masters, and I can assure you that very little is left from the meal of an Indian, who considers it a duty to eat all that is set before him, and is by no means nice at table. The dogs therefore are left to provide for themselves as best they can. For the most part, they work by night, and become very cunning and expert: hunger sharpens their rapacious instincts. Father Menetrey assures us that he has very often awoke in the morning as poor as Job, everything having been carried off during the night. It was in vain that he had taken every precaution which prudence suggested before going to bed, the industry of these nocturnal marauders got the better of all his care. Sleeping like a log after the fatigues of the day, he never heard the noise made by the thieves during their stay, though they often fought with one another in his tent over their spoils. The more vigilant savages were frequently aroused by the racket made in his tent, and were in the habit of coming to his rescue. Sometimes a good old Indian dame, armed with a big stick, would present herself suddenly upon the field of battle, dealing her blows right and left upon the combatants; again a stalwart young savage would venture into the Father's tent to disperse these midnight marauders and restore peace. Occasionally the good Father himself would be aroused by the noise of the howling of the dogs and the cries of those who had come to protect him. They would then set to work to repair, though rather too late, the breaches made in his fortifications, stopping up every hole and barricading the entry afresh. He would then lie down again, at the risk of another attack from these indefatigable robbers.

At last a council of chiefs was held on the subject, in which it was resolved to put an end to these scenes, so annoying to the missionary. They therefore surrounded his tent with an inclosure impenetrable to dogs. They went further even, and set to work in good earnest to build a presbytery with two apartments, attached to the church. One room was made to serve for a sleeping-room, and the other to meet in and for private conference with the priest. The good savages replaced, each time, the provisions and other objects stolen by their dogs. Taking the food, as it were, from their own mouths and from those of their children, that the Father might not suffer from hunger; for fear that the want of necessaries might shorten his stay among them.

It appears from these little details, that charity, the eldest daughter of religion, flourishes in the soul of the simple savage, as well as in that of the children of civilization. Though poorer and more humble among them, charity is not less industrious, not less beautiful: it is more simple and candid with them, and therefore more attractive.

Fort Vancouver, May 25, 1859.[4]

Dear Captain:

Toward the end of last March, owing to the deep snows and the impracticableness of the mountain passes, I received your kind favor of the 1st of January of the present year. I am happy to learn that my request to the general, about bringing down to Vancouver a deputation of the various chiefs of the upper tribes, met with his approval. I have no doubt, from the happy dispositions in which I left them at Walla Walla, the general's advice and counsel will be cheerfully and punctually followed out by them, and will prove highly beneficial to their respective tribes, and consolidate the peace established last fall by Colonel Wright.

[4] Addressed to Alfred Pleasonton, Captain Second Dragoons, Assistant Adjutant-General, U. S. A. Published in *New Indian Sketches*, pp. 130–135 and 141–146.

During my stay among the Rocky Mountain Indians, in the long and dreary winter, from the 21st of November last until the end of April, I have carried out, as far as lay in my power, the instructions of the general. I succeeded, I think, in removing many doubts and prejudices against the intentions of the Government, and against the whites generally, which were lurking in the minds of a great number of the most influential Indians. I held frequent conversations with the chieftains of the Cœur d'Alènes, the Spokans, several of the Skoyelpies, or Kettlefalls, and the lower Kalispels, who had chiefly aided, particularly the two first-mentioned tribes, in their lawless and savage attacks on Colonel Steptoe, and their war with Colonel Wright.

These various tribes, with the exception, perhaps, of a small portion of lawless Kettlefalls, and lower Kalispels, are well disposed, and will faithfully adhere to the conditions prescribed by Colonel Wright, and to any future requests and proposals of treaties coming from Government. The upper Pend d'Oreilles, the Kootenais and Flatheads, I found, as years ago, strong friends and adherents to the whites, and I have every reason to think that they will remain faithful; they ever glory, and truly, that not a drop of a white man's blood has ever been spilled by any one of their respective tribes. When I proposed to them that from each tribe a chief should accompany me down to Fort Vancouver, to pay their respects to the general, and to listen to his advice, all eagerly consented, and they kept in readiness for the long journey as soon as the snow would have sufficiently disappeared.

Meanwhile, Major Owen, agent among the Flatheads, arrived at St. Ignatius' Mission, and made known to me that he had received orders from the Superintendent of Indian Affairs and from Commissioner Mix, to bring down to Salem a chief of each tribe of the upper country. Upon this declaration I persuaded the Indians that as Major Owen had received orders from the highest authority he superseded me, and they should look upon him as their leader in this expedition, while I would follow on with them as far as practicable and I would be allowed. The major having brought no provisions for them, I lodged the chiefs in my own tent, and provided them with all necessary supplies from the 16th of April until the 13th instant, the day on which we reached Walla Walla, and where the chiefs were liberally provided for by Captain Dent, in command of the fort. The deputation of chiefs was stopped at Walla Walla by Major Owen, to await an express he had sent on from Spokan Prairie, with instructions to the superintendent at Salem.

My own instructions from the general, according to your letter of the 1st of January, "To return to Fort Vancouver as early in the spring as practicable, for some contingency might arise requiring the general's presence elsewhere," hurried me down in compliance with said order. With regard to Kamiakin, and his brother Schloom, I held several talks with them in February, March and April, and acquainted them with the general's order, wish and desire in their regard, namely, that they should follow me and surrender into his hands, assuring them, in the general's own words, that "the Government is always generous to a fallen foe, though it is at the same time determined to protect its citizens in every part of its territory," etc.

They invariably listened with attention and respect. Kamiakin made an open avowal of all he had done in his wars against the Government of the country, particularly in the attack on Colonel Steptoe, and in the war with Colonel Wright. Kamiakin stated that he strongly advised his people to the contrary, but was at last drawn into the contest by the most opprobrious language the deceitful Telgawax upbraided him with in full council, in presence of the various chiefs of the Cœur d'Alènes, Spokans and Palooses. Kamiakin repeatedly declared to me, and with the greatest apparent earnestness, that he never was a murderer, and, whenever he could, he restrained his people against all violent attacks on whites passing through the country.

On my way down to Vancouver from St. Ignatius' Mission, I met him again, near Thompson's Prairie, on Clark's Fork. Kamiakin declared he would go down and follow me if he had a horse to ride, his own not being in a condition to undertake a long journey. I had none to lend at that moment. At my arrival in the Spokan Prairie, meeting with Gerry, one of the Spokan chiefs, I acquainted him with the circumstance, and entreated him, for the sake of Kamiakin and his poor children, to send him a horse and an invitation to come on and to accompany the other chiefs to Walla Walla, and hence to Vancouver; it being his best opportunity to present himself before the general and superintendent, in order to expose his case to them and obtain rest and peace. Gerry complied with my request, and Kamiakin soon presented himself and joined the other chiefs. I had daily conversations with him until he reached Walla Walla: he places implicit confidence in the generosity of the general. I believe him sincere in his repeated declarations that henceforth nothing shall ever be able to withdraw him again from the path of peace, or, in his own words, "to unbury and raise the tomahawk against the whites." My candid impression is, should Kamiakin be allowed to return soon, pardoned and free, to his country, it will have the happiest and most salutary effect among the upper Indian tribes, and facilitate greatly all future transactions and views of Government in their regard. The Indians are anxiously awaiting the result; I pray that it may terminate favorably with Kamiakin. The sight of Kamiakin's children, the poverty and misery in which I found them plunged, drew abundant tears from my eyes. Kamiakin, the once powerful chieftain, who possessed thousands of horses and a large number of cattle, has lost all, and is now reduced to the most abject poverty. His brother Schloom, if he lives, will come in in the course of the summer. I left him at Clark's Fork sickly and almost blind: he could only travel by small journeys. Telgawax, a Paloos, I think, is among the Buffalo Nez Percés; from all I can learn, he has been the prime mover in all the late wars against Colonel Steptoe and Colonel Wright. His influence is not great, but he remains unceasing in his endeavors to create bitter feelings against the whites, whenever he can meet with an opportunity.

Fort Vancouver, W. T., May 28, 1859.

In compliance with the request of our worthy brigadier-general, I herewith give you a short narrative of the upper Washington Territory, as yet occupied by various Indian tribes, as far as my views and observations may have extended during several years' residence in that region, and particularly during the last winter trip I performed under the special directions of the general.

The distance from Fort Walla Walla to the great Spokan Prairie, through which the Spokan river flows, is about 150 miles. This whole region is undulating and hilly, and though generally of a light soil, it is covered with a rich and nutritious grass, forming grazing fields where thousands of cattle might be easily raised. It is almost destitute of timber until you are within thirty miles of the Spokan Prairie, where you find open woods and clusters of trees scattered far and wide; this portion, particularly, contains a great number of lakes and ponds with ranges of long walls of large basaltic columns and beds of basalt. The country abounds in nutritious roots (bitter-root, camas, etc.), on which principally the Indians subsist for a great portion of the year. The Spokan Prairie is about thirty miles from north to south and from east to west, bounded all around by well-wooded hills and mountains of easy access. The soil is generally light, though covered with abundance of grass.

Along the base of the hills and the mountains patches of several acres of rich arable land may be found. The Spokan Prairie is claimed by the Cœur d'Alène Indians. Taking Cœur d'Alène lake as a central point, their country may extend fifty miles to every point of the compass. The lake is a beautiful sheet of clear water, embedded amid lofty and high mountain bluffs, and shaded with a variety of pines, firs and cedars; in its whole circumference, to my knowledge, there is no arable land. The low bottoms in several of its many bays are subject to frequent and long inundations in the spring. The lake is about thirty miles in extent from south to north, its width throughout is from one to two or three miles. It receives its waters principally from two beautiful rivers, the St. Joseph and the Cœur d'Alène, running parallel from east to west; each is from sixty to eighty yards broad, with a depth of from twenty to thirty feet. After the spring freshet their currents are smooth and even, and are hardly perceptible for about thirty miles from their mouths, and until they penetrate into the high mountain region which separates their waters from those of Clark's Fork and of the St. Mary's or Bitter Root river; their respective valleys are from one to three miles broad, and are much subject to inundations in the spring; the narrow strips of land which border the two rivers are of the richest mould.

The deep snows in winter, the ice and water, keep these valleys literally blocked up during several months (last winter it continued for about five months). Small lakes, from one to three miles in circumference, are numerous in the two valleys. Camas, and other nutritious roots and berries abound in them. Beautiful forests of pine, etc., are found all along. The mountains bordering the two valleys are generally of an oval shape, and well wooded; a few only are snow-topped during the greatest portion of the year. All the rivers and rivulets in the Cœur d'Alène country abound wonderfully in mountain trout and other fish. The forests are well stocked with deer, with black and brown bears, and with a variety of fur-bearing animals. The long winters and deep snows must retard the settlement of this country.

Clark's Fork, at its crossing below the great Kalispel lake, is about forty miles distant from Spokan Prairie. Clark's

Fork is one of the principal tributaries of the upper Columbia. From its entrance into the lake to the Niyoutzamin, or Vermilion river, a distance of about seventy miles, I counted thirty-eight rapids. You meet with a succession of rapids and falls to its very head. Before it joins the Columbia, for a distance of about thirty miles, its rapids and falls are insuperable. In its whole length Clark's river has few spots of good and arable soil, with ranges of dense and thick forests. The upper portion of the river, and its upper tributaries, have a succession of large prairies of light soil filled with water-worn pebbles, indicating bottoms or beds of ancient lakes. All these prairies are covered with a luxuriant and nutritious grass, and owing, probably, to the position of the high mountains by which they are surrounded, they are little or not covered with snows in the winter season. Such are Thompson's Prairie, Horse Prairie, Camas Prairie, Jaco [Jocko] Prairie, Flathead Lake Prairie, with several other minor grazing fields. Far and wide apart, spots of less or more acres of good arable land are found; but too few, indeed, to make it for years to come a thickly-settled portion for the whites.

The country of the upper Clark's Fork, the St. Mary's or Bitter Root valley, the valley of Hell's Gate Fork, the upper valleys on the Beaver headwaters, the Kootenai country within the forty-ninth degree, and under the jurisdiction of the United States, appear to be laid out and designed by Providence to serve as reserves for the remnants of the various scattered tribes of Oregon and Washington Territory, at least for some years to come. This region, I should think, might contain all the Indians, and afford them the means of subsistence. The rivers could supply them with fish, the prairies with domestic cattle; deer and elk are still abundant, the buffalo grounds are not far off; wild edible roots and fruits are plenty; while in each section a sufficient portion of arable land might be found and reclaimed for their sustenance. Should all the remnants of Indians be gathered in this upper region, one single military post would suffice to protect them against all encroachments and infringements of evil-disposed whites on Indians, and of Indians on the rights of the whites.

As the reserves are now laid out in Washington and Oregon Territories, far and wide apart, surrounded and accessible on all sides by whites, experience teaches that it must lead to the speedy destruction of the poor Indians. Liquor and its concomitants, sickness and vice, will soon accomplish the work. Providence has intrusted and placed these weak tribes under the care and protection of a powerful Government, whose noble end has always been to protect and advance them. If aided and assisted, in a proper situation, with agricultural implements, with schools, mills, blacksmiths, etc., I have no doubt but thousands of the aborigines might be reclaimed, and live to bless their benefactors. In the topographical memoir of Colonel Wright's campaign, recently published (page 75), I read to this effect: "The Government, in its wisdom and prudence, should make some timely provision for these many Indians by selecting for and placing them upon proper reservations, in order that they may not be caused to disappear by the fast-approaching waves of civilization and settlement, that must overtake and eventually destroy them." I have labored for several years among the upper tribes in the capacity of missionary. My companions have carried on the work to the present time, and will, I hope, continue their labors. The want of adequate means has greatly retarded one of the principal objects we had in view,— their civilization. We can all, and do, cheerfully testify to the good dispositions of these upper tribes. Should they be supplied with the necessary implements of agriculture, with oxen, etc., they would all work, and would soon place themselves above want and in comfortable circumstances. As for schools, all are anxious to have their children taught. These are a few points I desire to be allowed to present to the consideration of the general, if they can in anywise tend to the amelioration of the lot of the Indians.

CHAPTER IV.

NOTES ON THE PAWNEES.

Tribes of the Pawnees — Dwellings — Abandonment of the aged — Morning star worship — Human sacrifice — Particulars of sacrifice of a Sioux captive.

Philadelphia, April 6, 1847.

Mr. J. D. Bryant:[1]

DEAR SIR.— The nation of the Pawnees is divided into four great tribes, which act in concert as one people. They have their villages upon the river Platte, or Nebraska, and its tributaries, about 150 miles west of the Missouri river. They are the same true children of the desert as they have been these many ages. They dress in the skins of animals killed in the chase. They cultivate maize and squashes, using the shoulder-blade of the buffalo as a substitute for the plow and hoe. In the season of the chase, a whole village, men, women and children, abandon their settlements and go in pursuit of the animals whose flesh supplies them with food. Their huts, which they call *akkapos,* are circular, and about 140 feet in circumference. They are ingeniously formed by planting young trees at suitable distances apart, then bending and joining their tops to a number of pillars or posts fixed circularly in the centre of the inclosure. The trees are then covered with bark, over which is thrown a layer of earth nearly a foot in thickness, and finally a solid mass of green turf completes the structure.

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[1] The account of human sacrifice among the Pawnees was published as Letters XXVI, *Oregon Missions,* XXVIII, *Missions de l'Orégon.* It is dated as above in both, but addressed in French to a Father. The English, which seems to be a translation from the French, is here followed.

These dwellings, thus completed, resemble hillocks. A large aperture in the top serves to admit the light and also to emit the smoke. They are very warm in winter, and cool, but oftentimes very damp, in summer. They are large enough to contain ten or a dozen families.

If, on the long journeys which they undertake in search of game, any should be impeded, either by age or sickness, their children or relations make a small hut of dried grass to shelter them from the heat of the sun or from the weather, leaving as much provision as they are able to spare, and thus abandon them to their destiny. Nothing is more touching than this constrained separation, caused by absolute necessity — the tears and cries of the children on the one hand, and the calm resignation of the aged father or mother on the other. They often encourage their children not to expose their own lives in order to prolong their short remnant of time. They are anxious to depart on their long journey and to join their ancestors in the hunting grounds of the Great Spirit. If, some days after, they are successful in the chase, they return as quickly as possible to render assistance and consolation. These practices are common to all the nomadic tribes of the mountains.

The Pawnees have nearly the same ideas concerning the universal deluge as those which I have given of the Potawatomies. In relation to the soul, they say that there is a resemblance in the body which does not die, but detaches itself when the body expires. If a man has been good during this life, kind to his parents, a good hunter, a good warrior, his soul (*sa ressemblance*) is transported into a land of delights, abundance and pleasures. If, on the contrary, a man has been wicked, hard-hearted, cruel and indolent, his soul passes through narrow straits, difficult and dangerous, into a country where all is confusion, contrariety and unhappiness.

In their religious ceremonies they dance, sing and pray before a bird stuffed with all kinds of roots and herbs used in their superstition. They have a fabulous tradition, which teaches them that the morning star sent this bird to their ancestors, as its representative, with orders to invoke it on all important occasions and to exhibit it in times of sacrifice. Before the invocation, they fill the calumet with the sacred herb contained in the bird. They then puff out the smoke toward the star, offer the prayers and make their demands, dancing and singing, and celebrating in verses the great power of the bird. They implore its assistance and its favor, whether to obtain success in hunting or in war, or to demand snow in order to make the buffalo descend from the mountains, or to appease the Great Spirit when a public calamity befalls the nation, or a family, or even a single person. The Pawnees are one of the few aboriginal tribes, which, descending from the ancient Mexicans, are guilty of offering human sacrifices. In order to justify this barbarous practice, they say that the morning star taught them by means of the bird, that such sacrifices were agreeable to it, and would bring down upon the nation the favor of Tirawa, the great Deliberator[2] of the universe. They are firmly persuaded that human sacrifices are most agreeable to the Great Spirit. Hence, when the Pawnee takes a prisoner and wishes to render himself acceptable to heaven, he devotes it to the morning star. At the time of sacrifice, he delivers the prisoner over into the hands of the jugglers; soon after which commence the ceremonies preparatory to the offering. I was in the neighborhood when one of these bloody sacrifices took place, and the particulars, which I am about to relate, were reported to me by worthy eye-witnesses.[3]

The victim in this horrid transaction was a young Sioux or Dakota girl, aged fifteen years, who had been taken prisoner by the Pawnees about six months previous to her immolation. During the months of her captivity, she received from the Pawnees every mark of regard which savages are capable of bestowing. She was an honored guest at all the

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[2] A name which they give to the Great Spirit.—*Author's Note.*

[3] In his *Letters and Sketches*, p. 73, written 1841, Father De Smet places this occurrence in 1837.

fêtes and festivities of the village; and everywhere was treated, in appearance at least, rather as a fond friend than as a prisoner. It is the custom thus to prepare the victim, in order to conceal their infernal design.

The month of April, being the season for planting, is on that account selected for the offering of their abominable sacrifices. To this end, four of the principal savages of the tribe assemble in the largest and most beautiful *akkaro* or hut, to deliberate with Tirawa concerning the sacrifice of the victim. According to their belief, a human offering is rewarded by him with an abundant harvest, he fills the hunting grounds convenient to their villages with immense herds of buffaloes, deer and antelopes, thus enabling them to kill their prey with more facility and with less risk of coming in contact with other warlike and hostile nations.

The oldest savage of the tribe presides at the feast given on the occasion. Ten of the best singers and musicians, each with his peculiar instrument, squat in the middle of the *akkaro*. Four of them have dried calabashes in their hands, from which the seeds have been extracted and small pebbles placed in their stead, which, being shaken by the muscular arms of these gigantic savages, produce a sound like falling hail. Four others beat their *tekapiroutche* — this is a kind of drum of a most mournful and deafening [Fr. sourd] sound; it is made from the trunk of a tree and is about three feet long and one-and-a-half broad, covered at both ends with deer skin. The remaining two have a kind of flute made of reeds, about two feet long and one inch in diameter, instruments such as were used by the ancient shepherds, and which give forth sounds that may be heard at the distance of half a mile. They fasten to each instrument a little *tewaara*, or medicine bag, filled with roots and other materials, to which, in their superstitious rites, they attach a supernatural power that renders their offering more agreeable to the Author of Life. Four sentinels, each armed with a lance, take their position at the four cardinal points of the lodge, to maintain order among the spectators and to prevent the entrance of the women, young girls and children. The guests are seated upon the ground or upon mats on the right and left of the presiding juggler, turning around from time to time in the most grotesque and ridiculous dances. Imagine thirty swarthy savages, with their bodies tattooed; their faces besmeared with paint — white, black, made of soot and the scrapings of the kettles, yellow, green and vermilion; and their long and disheveled hair clotted with mud or clay. Placing themselves in a circle, they shriek, they leap, and give to their bodies, their arms, their legs and their heads a thousand hideous contortions; while streams of perspiration, pouring down their bodies, render the horrors of their appearance still more dreadful by the confused commingling of the colors with which they are smeared — now they crowd together pell-mell, then separate, some to the right, some to the left, one upon one foot, another upon two, while others go on all-fours without order, and although without the appearance of measure, yet in perfect harmony with their drums, their calabashes and their flutes.

Near the centre of the hut, at about four feet from the fire-place, are placed four large buffalo heads, dissected, in order that they may take the augury. The presiding juggler, the musicians and the dancers have their heads covered with the down of the swan, which sticks to them by means of honey, with which they smear their hair — a practice common to all the tribes of North America in their superstitious rites. The president or presiding juggler alone is painted with red, the musicians, one-half red and the other half black,[4] while all the others are daubed with all colors, and in the most fantastic figures.

Each time that the music, the songs and the dances are performed, the spectators observe the most profound silence, and during the space of thirty minutes that the extraordinary charivari continues, nothing is heard but the chants, the cries, the howlings and the music. When all have figured in the dance, the presiding juggler gives the signal to stop, crying out with all the force of his lungs. Immediately all cease, each one takes his place, and the auditory responds: "Néva! Néva! Néva!" it is well, it is well, it is well! The dancers then fill the ancient *nawishkaro*, or religious calumet, which is used only upon occasions the most important. They offer it to the president, who, striking with both his hands the long pipe, adorned with pearls and worked with different figures, goes and squats himself down by the fire-place. One of the guards places a coal upon the mysterious calumet. Having lighted it, he rises and gives a puff to each of the musicians without once slacking his hold from the pipe. He then turns toward the centre, and raising his eyes toward heaven, he offers the calumet to the Master of Life, resting for a moment in majestic silence: then, offering three puffs to heaven, he speaks these words: "O Tirawa! Thou who beholdest all things, smoke with thy children, and take pity on us." He then offers the calumet to the buffalo heads, their great manitous, salutes each of them with two puffs, and then goes to empty the bowl of the pipe in a wooden dish, prepared for that purpose, that the sacred ashes may be afterward gathered and preserved in a deer-skin pouch.[5]

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[4] Fr. white.

After the dance, the master of ceremonies serves up the repast to the guests, seated in a circle. The food consists of dried buffalo meat and boiled maize, served in wooden plates filled to the brim. Each one is bound to empty his plate, even should he expose himself to the danger of death from indigestion. The president offers a portion of the meat and maize to the Great Spirit, and places it accordingly upon the ground, and he then makes a similar offering to one of the buffalo heads, which is supposed to be a party to the feast. At length, while each one occupies himself with doing honor to his plate, one of the chiefs of the band rises up and announces to all the guests that the Master of Life dances with him, and that he accepts the calumet and the feasting. All the band reply: "Néva! Néva! Néva!" This is the first condemnation.

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[5] This method of smoking is in great repute among all the savages of the West. It is of the same importance and equally as binding as an oath among civilized nations. If two savages, ready to kill each other, can be induced to accept the calumet, the dispute ceases, and the bond of their friendship becomes stronger than ever.—*Author's Note.*

The repast ended, they again dance, after which the calumet is lighted the second time; and as in the former instance, is offered to the Master of Life and to the buffalo heads, upon which the lodge again resounds with the triple cry, "Néva!" This last dance condemns without appeal the unfortunate victim whose immolation is invoked.

After all their grotesque dances, their cries, their chants and their vociferations, the savages, preceded by the musicians, go out of the lodge to present the sacred calumet to the buffalo heads placed on the tops of the lodges of the village, each of which is ornamented with from two to eight heads, preserved as the trophies of their skill in the chase. At each puff the multitude raise a furious cry, for now the whole village joins in the extraordinary procession. They stop before the lodge of the Sioux girl, and make the air resound with horrible imprecations against their enemies and against the unfortunate and innocent victim, who represents them on the present occasion. From this moment she is guarded by two old satellites, whose office it is to beguile her from the least suspicion that she is the victim for the coming sacrifice; and whose duty it also is to entertain her upon the great feast they prepare on the occasion in her honor, and that she may be well fed in order to appear more beautiful and fat, and thereby more agreeable to the Master of Life. This ends the first day of the ceremonies.

On the second day, two old female savages, with disheveled hair, their faces wrinkled and daubed with black[6] and red paint, their naked arms and legs tattooed, barefooted, and with no other dress than a deer-skin petticoat, extending down to the knee — in a word, two miserable-looking beldams, capable of striking terror in any beholder,— issue from their huts with pipes[7] in their hands, ornamented with the scalps which their husbands have taken from their unhappy enemies. Passing through the village, they dance around each *akkaro*, solemnly announcing "that the Sioux girl has been given to the Master of Life by wise and just men, that the offering is acceptable to him, and that each one should prepare to celebrate the day with festivity and mirth." At this announcement the idlers and children of the village move about and shout with joy. They then, still dancing, re-conduct the two old squaws to their huts, before which they place their pikes as trophies, and enter. All then return to their own lodge, to partake of the feasts of their relatives.

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[6] Fr. white.

About ten o'clock in the morning of the third day, all the young women and girls of the village, armed with hatchets, repair to the lodge of their young and unhappy captive, and invite her to go into the forest with them to cut wood. The simple-hearted, confiding child accepts their malicious invitation with eagerness and joy, happy to breathe once more the pure air. They then give her a hatchet, and the female troop advance toward the place marked out in the dance, making the forest resound with shouts of joy. Atipaat, an old squaw who conducts them, designates by a blow of the hatchet the tree which is to be cut down. Each then gives it one blow, after which the victim approaches to complete the work. As soon as she commences what seems to her but pastime, the whole crowd of young furies surround her, howling and dancing. Unconscious that the tree is to supply the wood for her own sacrifice, the poor child pursues her work as if a great honor had been reserved for her. Atipaat, the old woman, then fastens to her the ashki[8] with which to draw the wood.

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[7] Fr. pikes.

[8] The ashki is a cord, made of horse hair or of the bark of the elm, which they prepare by boiling it in cold water. It varies from twenty-

The troop then lead the way toward the village, dancing as they pass along, but giving the hapless victim almost no assistance in dragging her load. An innumerable multitude attend them to the place of sacrifice, and receive them with loud acclamations. They there relieve her of her burden and again place her in the hands of the guards, who, with voices harsh and quivering, chant the great deeds of their younger days and re-conduct her to her lodge. In the meantime the whole band assist to arrange the wood between two trees, after which they immediately disperse.

On the morning of the fourth day, before sunrise, a savage visits all the lodges to announce to each family, in the name of the Master of Life, that they must furnish two billets of wood about three feet long for the sacrifice.

Then thirty warriors issue from their lodges, decked in all sorts of accoutrements; their heads adorned with deer and buffalo horns, with the tails of horses and the plumes of the eagle and heron, interwoven with their scalplocks, while the tails of wolves and wild cats stream from various parts behind, as the wings of Mercury are represented, with pendants hanging from their noses and ears, so elongated by the weight of the ornaments suspended to them that they float about and strike against their shoulders. Glass beads, or necklaces of brass[9] or steel, adorn their necks, while highly-ornamented deer-skin leggins and curiously-painted buffalo skins, negligently thrown over their shoulders, complete their grotesque habiliments. Thus accoutred they present themselves at the hut of their captive, who is already adorned with the most beautiful dress their fancy can devise, or the materials at their command produce. Her head-dress is composed of the feathers of the eagle and

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five to sixty feet in length, and, although it is but about one inch in thickness, it is strong enough to bind the most powerful man. This they adorn with the quills of the porcupine and with little bells. The bells, besides for the sake of ornament, are intended to give notice in case the victim makes any efforts to escape.—*Author's Note.*

[9] Fr. perles.

swan, and descends behind in gracefully waving curves, even to the ground. Her person is properly painted with red and black lines. A frock of deer skin descends to the knee, while a beautiful pair of leggins extend from thence to the ankle. A pair of moccasins garnished with porcupine quills, pearl and glass beads, are on her feet. Pendants hang from her ears and nose, a necklace ornaments her neck, and bracelets her arms; nothing was spared that could add to her beauty.

Tranquility and joy distinguish her as she approaches the grand feast, which she has been made to believe her kind guardians have prepared to honor her. At the first cry of the warriors, the poor child comes out of the hut and walks at the head of her executioners, who follow in single file. As they pass along they enter into all the huts, where the most profound silence and the utmost propriety reign. The Sioux girl walks round the fire-place, her followers do the same, and, just as she leaves the lodge, the principal squaw gives her two billets of wood, which the unconscious victim gives in her turn to each of the savages. In this manner, when she has been made to collect all the wood to serve for her immolation, she takes her place in the rear of the band, joyous and content that she has had the happiness to contribute to the pleasure of her executioners; after which they again restore her to her two guards, to be presented with her last repast, which consists of a large plate of maize.

All now wait in anxious expectation to witness the last scene of the bloody drama. The whole village is in commotion. Everywhere the warriors, old and young, may be seen preparing their murderous arrow, as upon the eve of a battle. Some practice shooting at a mark; the more barbarous, thirsting for the blood of their enemies, encourage and instruct their children in the use of the bow and arrow, and what part of the body they ought to strike. The young women and girls devote themselves to clearing away the bushes and preparing the place of sacrifice, after the accomplishment of which they employ themselves during the rest of that day and night in polishing their necklaces, pendants and bracelets, and all the other ornaments in which they wish to appear at the great feast.

On the fifth day, an aide-de-camp of Lecharoutétewarouchte, or the chief of sacrifice, ran through the village to announce, in the name of his master, the necessity of preparing the red and black paint, which is to serve for the grand ceremony. It is vain to attempt to give you, my dear sir, an adequate description of this personage, either as regards his costume, his figure, or his manner; it is everything that a savage can invent of the fantastic, the ridiculous and the frightful, united in one person. The collector of colors himself scarcely yields to his comrade in monstrosity. He has the appearance of one, truly, just escaped from the infernal regions. His body is painted black, which, contrasted with the whiteness of his teeth and of his huge eyes, and with his hair besmeared with white clay and bristling like the mane of a lion, gives him an aspect terrible and ferocious in the extreme. At each heel is fastened the tail of a wolf, and on his feet a pair of moccasins made of buffalo skin, with the long shaggy hair on the outside. He passes through the whole village with a measured step, holding a wooden plate in each hand. He enters the huts successively, and as he approaches the fire-place he cries aloud: "The Master of Life sends me here." Immediately a woman comes and empties into one of his plates either some red or some black paint, which she had prepared. Upon the reception of which, he raises his eyes to heaven, and with a loud voice says: "Regard the love of thy children, O Tirawa! However poor, all that they possess is thine, and they give it to thee. Grant us an abundant harvest. Fill our hunting grounds with buffalo, deer, stags and antelope. Make us powerful against our enemies, so that we may again renew this great sacrifice." Each one replies by the usual exclamation: "Néva! Néva! Néva!"

After the return of the collector of colors, and before sunrise, the last scene commences. Men and women, boys and girls, daub themselves in all the colors and forms imaginable. They deck themselves in whatever they possess which in their estimation is either beautiful or precious — pearls, beads, porcelain collars, the claws of the white [grizzly] bear, (this is in their view the most costly and valuable decoration) bracelets and pendants; nothing is forgotten on this occasion. They ornament their hair with the feathers of the heron, and of the gray eagle, a bird superstitiously venerated by them. Thus equipped for their sortie, they listen attentively for the first signal to the sacrifice.

While these preparations are in progress, the Tewaarouchte, a religious band of distinguished warriors, known in the procession by the down of swans upon their hair or upon the tops of their heads, and by their naked bodies painted in red and black lines, follow the braves of the nation armed with their bows and arrows, which are sedulously concealed beneath their buffalo robes. Thus they approach the lodge where the unconscious victim awaits, as she thinks, the happy moment for the festivities given in her honor to commence. She is now delivered into the hands of her executioners, dressed in the beautiful costume of the previous day, with the addition of cords tied to her wrists and ankles. The poor child is all interest and in a kind of impatience to participate in the grand festivities. She smiles as she looks round upon the most cruel and the most revengeful enemies of her race. Not the slightest agitation, fear or suspicion is visible in her manner. She walks with joy and confidence in the midst of her executioners. Arrived at the fatal spot, a frightful presentiment flashes across her mind. There is no one of her own sex present. In vain do her eyes wander from place to place, in order to find the evidences of a feast. Why that solitary fire? And those three posts, which she herself drew from the forest, and which she saw fastened between two trees, and those swarthy figures of the warriors, what can they mean? All, all indicate some dreadful project. They order her to mount the three posts. Sne hesitates, she trembles as an innocent lamb prepared for the slaughter. She weeps most bitterly and with a voice the most touching, such as must have broken any other hearts than those of these savage men, she implores them not to kill her.

With a persuasive tone they endeavor to convince her that their intention is not to injure her, but that the ceremonies in which she participates are indispensable before the grand feast. One of the most active of the savages unrolls the cords tied to her wrists and assists her to mount the post. He passes the cords over the branches of the two trees, between which the sacrifice is to be made. These are rendered firm by the powerful arms of the other savages, and her feet immediately fastened to the topmost of the three posts, which she had unconsciously cut and drawn to the fatal spot. On the instant all doubt of their intentions vanishes from her mind. The savages no longer conceal from her their frightful project. She cries aloud, she weeps, she prays; but her supplications, her tears and her prayers are alike drowned in the melée and cry of their horrible imprecations against her nation.

Upon her innocent and devoted head they concentrate the full measure of their vengeance, of all the cruelties, of all the crimes, of all the injustice and cruelty of the Sioux, which may have taken place in their most cruel and protracted wars, and which from time immemorial had been transmitted from father to son as a precious heritage of vengeance and resentment. In a manner the most furious and most triumphant they exult with leaping and howling, like wild beasts, around their trembling victim. They then despoil her of all her ornaments and of her dress, when the chief of the sacrifice approaches and paints one-half of her body black and the other half red, the colors of their victims. He then scorches her armpits and sides with a pine-knot torch. After these preparatory rites, he gives the signal to the whole tribe, who make the air resound with the terrible war-cry, the Sassaskwi. At this piercing cry, which freezes the heart with terror, which paralyzes the timid and rouses the ardor of the brave, which confounds the buffalo in his course, and fills the bear with such fear as to take from him all the power of resisting or fleeing from his enemies, the savages, impatient and greedy for blood, issue from their dark lodges. Like a terrific hurricane they rush headlong to the fatal spot. Their cries, mingled with the noise of their feet, resemble the roar of thunder, increasing as the storm approaches. As a swarm of bees surround their queen, these Pawnee savages encompass the Sioux child — their trembling victim. In the twinkling of an eye, their bows are bent and their arrows adjusted to the cords. The arrow of Lecharoutétéwarouchte, or chief of the sacrifice, is the only one which is barbed with iron. With this it is his province to pierce the heart of the innocent Dakota. A profound silence reigns for an instant among the ferocious band. No sound breaks the awful stillness save the sobs and piteous moans of the victim, who hangs trembling in the air, while the chief of the sacrifice makes a last offering of her to the Master of the Universe. At that moment he transfixes her through the heart — upon the instant a thousand murderous arrows quiver in the body of the poor child. Her whole body is one shapeless mass, riddled with arrows as numerous as are the quills upon the back of the porcupine.

While the howling and the dancing continue, the great chief of the nation, mounting the three posts in triumph, plucks the arrows from the dead body and casts them into the fire. The iron-barbed arrow is the only one preserved for future sacrifices. He then squeezes the blood from the mangled flesh upon the maize and other seeds, which stand around in baskets ready to be planted; and then, as the last act of this cruel and bloody sacrifice, he plucks the still palpitating heart from the body, and, heaping the fiercest imprecations upon the enemies of his race, devours it amidst the shouts and screams of his people. The rite is finished. The haughty and satisfied savages move away from the scene of their awful tragedy; they pass the remainder of the day in feasts and merriment. The murdered and deformed body hangs where it was immolated, a prey to wolves and carnivorous birds. I will end this painful tragedy, by giving you an extract of a former letter.

"Such horrid cruelties could not but bring down the wrath of heaven upon their nation. As soon as the report of the sacrifice reached the Sioux, they burned with the desire to avenge their honor, and bound themselves by oaths that they would not rest until they had killed as many Pawnees as their innocent victim had bones or joints in her body. More than 100 Pawnees have at length fallen under their tomahawks, and their oaths have since been still more amply fulfilled in the massacre of their wives and children.

"In view of so much cruelty, who could mistake the agency of the arch enemy of mankind, and who would refuse to exert himself to bring these benighted nations to the knowledge of the One only true Mediator between God and man, and of the only true sacrifice without which it is impossible to appease the Divine justice?"

With sentiments of respect and esteem, etc.

CHAPTER V.

NOTES ON CERTAIN WESTERN TRIBES.[1]

The Snakes and Utes — Poverty and degradation — Enslavement of children by Spanish — Cannibalism — The wealthy Nez Percés — The decent Cayuses and the Camas root — The interesting Flatheads — Other tribes — Further account of the Flatheads and their country — Neighboring tribes.

THE Utes, a tribe of the Snakes, burn their relatives' bodies, with the best horses that the dead man owned. The body is placed, with the horses, after cutting their throats, upon a big pile of dry wood. When the smoke rises in eddies, they think the soul of the Indian takes its flight to the land of spirits, borne by his faithful steeds; and to excite them to soar more swiftly, they all together give utterance to frightful howls.

The Sampeetches, Pah-Utes and Yam-pah-Utes are the nearest neighbors to the Snakes. There is not, very likely, in all the universe, a more miserable, more degraded and poorer people. The French commonly call them *les Dignes-de-pitié*, or those who deserve to be pitied, and the name suits them admirably. The land they inhabit is a veritable waste. They lodge in crevices of the rocks, or in holes dug in the earth; they have no clothing; their only weapons are a bow, arrows and a pointed stick; they range the barren plains in search of ants and grasshoppers, on which they feed, and they think it a feast when they come upon a few tasteless roots or nauseous grains.

Respectable and credible persons have assured me that they eat the corpses of their kindred, and sometimes even their own children. Their number is unknown, for they are seldom seen more than two, three or four together.

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[1] From Father De Smet's account of his journey to the Flatheads in 1840. Translated from *Voyages aux Montagnes Rocheuses*, pp. 31-35.

They are so timid that a stranger would have a good deal of trouble to approach them. As soon as they espy one, whether white man or Indian, they give the alarm by lighting a *boucan* or wood-smoke; the next moment, the signal is repeated wherever one of them may be. More than 400 have been counted at once, running at this signal to hide in the inaccessible rocks; whence it is presumed that they are very numerous. When they go out to hunt for roots and ants, they hide their young ones in the brush or in holes in the rocks. Now and then some of them will venture to leave their hiding-places and come to find the whites, to sell them their children for trifles. Sometimes the Spanish of California make incursions into their country to carry off their children. I have been assured that they treat them with humanity, give them religious instruction, and grant them their liberty as soon as they reach a certain age, or else keep them in a sort of slavery, intrusting to them the care of their horses or making them work on their farms. I have had the consolation of baptizing several of these wretched creatures; they too have given me the same account. It would be easy to find guides among these new converts, and by this means one could introduce himself among those poor forsaken creatures, teach them the consoling news of the gospel and render their lot, if not happier on earth, better at least for the hope of a future of eternal happiness. If God grants me the grace to return to the mountains, and my superiors permit me, I shall gladly devote myself to the conversion of these miserable and truly pitiable men.

The country of the Utahs is situated east and southeast from that of the Shoshones, upon the sources of the Rio Colorado [Green river]; there are about 4,000 of them. They seem gentle and affable, very polite and hospitable to strangers, and charitable among themselves. They live by hunting and fishing and on fruits and roots, spontaneous products of their territory. There is nothing extraordinary about their raiment; their manners are of great simplicity. It is a warm land, the climate is favorable, and the soil very well suited to cultivation.

Proceeding toward the north, one comes to the Nez Percés. There are places in their country very fertile and well adapted to agriculture; also vast and rich grazing lands. These Indians own a great number of horses; some have as many as 500 or 600. The nation of the Nez Percés contains near 2,500 inhabitants. Though there are Protestant ministers among them, from reports which they themselves have made, as well as conversations I have had with several of the chiefs, it is clear that they would be charmed to have Catholic missionaries.

On the west of the Nez Percés are the Cayuses, decent, peaceable and hospitable. There are upward of 2,000 of them. Their wealth, like that of the Nez Percés, consists in horses, but of the best stock in the mountains. A great part of their territory is very fertile, and produces in great abundance a certain root called *Kammache,*[2] whereof they make bread, and which, with fish and game, forms their habitual fare.

The Walla Wallas dwell upon the river of the same name, one of the tributaries of the Columbia, and their country also extends along that river. They number about 500. Their character, customs and habits differ in no respect from those of the savages just named.

The Paloos tribe belongs to the nation of the Nez Percés and resembles them in all respects. It inhabits the borders of the Nez Percés and Pavilion rivers. There are scarce 300 of them.

The four nations that I have just named speak the same tongue, with slight differences of dialect.

Northwest of the Palooses is found the nation of the Spokans. They are nearly 800 persons. Several small tribes, who may be considered as belonging to the same nation, stay in that neighborhood. Their country is diversified by mountains and valleys, some portions of which are very fertile. They call themselves Children of the Sun, which in their language is *Spokani*. Their main subsistence is fishing and hunting, roots and fruits. East of them are the Cœur d'Alènes, about 700 souls. They are distinguished by their civility, decency and kindness. Their land is more open than that of the Spokans and better suited to cultivation.

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[2] Camas (*camassia esculenta*).

The land of my dear Flatheads is still farther east and southeast and reaches to the Rocky Mountains. This tribe is unquestionably the most interesting in all Oregon. Frank, noble and generous in their dispositions, they have always shown great good will toward the whites, and a great desire for a knowledge of the Christian religion. They are about 800 in number; they lead a nomadic life; they hunt the buffalo upon the Clark and Salmon rivers; and every spring they cross the mountains and come as far down as the junction of the three forks of the Missouri. This nation has been greatly reduced by the continual attacks of the Blackfeet. Though they are of great bravery, they are very peaceable in their dispositions, and to avoid their enemies, they desire to settle permanently upon their lands. They are awaiting the return of our missionaries to execute this praiseworthy design. "To cultivate the soil and live as good and fervent Christians, such," they say, "is the object of our desires." Their country is mountainous, but interspersed with smiling and fertile valleys, very rich in grazing lands. The mountains are cold, covered with snow during a great part of the year; but in the valleys the climate is mild.

The Pondéras, commonly called the Pend d'Oreilles, are like the Flatheads in body, character, disposition, manners, customs and language; at present they form with them only one and the same people. Their number amounts to more than 1,200. They dwell north of Clark's Fork and upon the shores of a lake that bears their name. Their country includes some very fertile spots. They are awaiting our return with impatience, to begin cultivating them and to continue living together with the Flatheads, beneath the holy law of the gospel, which I have had the happiness of preaching to them for three months, and to which they have all submitted with the greatest eagerness and docility.

I think you will not read without interest a short account of my stay among them and of my excursions in their company. Do not be surprised at my having led the wandering life of a savage from the month of April to December, living by hunting and on roots, without bread, sugar or coffee, my only bed a buffalo robe and a woolen blanket, passing my nights under the stars when the weather was good and braving the storms and tempests under a little tent. I have mentioned a fever that I had, which seemed determined not to leave me; well, by leading this hard life, I rid myself of it entirely; I have been in wonderful health since September.

Honorable and Dear Sir:[3]

To comply with your kind request of giving you an outline of the upper Indians on the waters of the Columbia with whom we have become acquainted, I have the honor to state:

1st. With regard to the Flatheads. Their number amounts to about 550. Since the regulation of marriages no Christian principles have been introduced among them. They are visibly on the increase. The Flatheads may be called a grave, modest and decent people. The gross vices so common among many other nations are unknown among them. Adultery is of the rarest occurrence and their honesty has been ever acknowledged by all travelers and strangers who have visited their country. Any object found is immediately restored to the owner, if known; if not, it is deposited with the chief or Black-robe.

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[3] Uncertain to whom this letter was addressed. About 1845.

Their piety is truly moving. They listen with the greatest attention to the word of God. The chiefs are held in great esteem and their counsels are generally followed. Their charity toward the old and infirm is very great. The name of orphan is unknown among them. Immediately after the death of their parents they are adopted by relations and friends and they take their place and share among the children of the family. They love and esteem the whites highly, and glory and take pride that they never spilt a drop of the white man's blood. Frequently have they been seen to expose their own existence to save the life of their beloved Boston (American).

Though not habituated, they may be said to love labor and may easily be brought over to learn to till the soil. The climate is very healthy. Among them epidemics, bilious complaints and fevers of all descriptions are almost entirely unknown.

The long summer droughts are an obstacle to agriculture, however. The numerous mountain rivulets and springs may remedy this inconvenience in the immediate neighborhood of the different water-courses. The soil is good and fertile and St. Mary's valley (or *Racine Amère*) which extends for about 200 miles, from northwest to southeast, might by irrigation become very productive. The mountains are almost entirely covered with red and white pine and cedar; the poplar is found in great and dense clusters along the main streams. In 1844 forty bushels of potatoes produced upward of 900 bushels. I have seen several potatoes of the size of a man's head. The astonishment of the good Indians was raised to the highest pitch when the monstrous roots were taken out of the ground. All thanked God and promised to work, and all assisted with delight at the first great potato feast in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. Carrots, beets, parsnips, turnips, all sorts of vegetable roots grow here in abundance and of an excellent quality.

Owing to the great want of tools and to the difficulties of procuring them, the Indians have been till now in the necessity of making a summer and winter hunt to procure provisions and clothing by means of the buffalo chase and of other animals, such as the elk, the moose, the mountain sheep, the red fox and black-tailed deer, the antelope and the bear.

Buffalo and beaver are becoming every year more scarce and will soon fail them altogether. We hope the providence of God will come to their relief and that means will be found to procure them implements and tools to settle them permanently at St. Mary's, the village and spot they have chosen for their abode.

A school has been commenced at which all the children attend during their stay at the village. One of the missionaries having found excellent dispositions for music among the Flathead youth, has formed a musical band who play with great ease and harmony passages from the best composers.

2d. The upper Kalispels or Pend d'Oreilles. The country of these Indians consists principally in forests and plains. The upper valley above the great Flathead lake appears to be very rich in soil and very productive and contains a great number of beautiful plains, among which the Camas and Horse plains are the most conspicuous. From below the latter to the head of the Kalispel lake, a distance of about 100 miles, Clark's river is lined with almost impenetrable forests, inaccessible rocks and mountains, and runs on over many ledges of rocks, forming falls and rapids, rendering its navigation very dangerous even to small skiffs and canoes, and impossible to larger crafts. At the head of the above lake cedars are found in abundance, measuring from thirty to fifty feet in circumference.

The Kalispels speak the same language as the Flatheads; their dispositions and customs are the same; they are equally as honest and as docile. An establishment is immediately to be commenced among them, and we have the assurance that their aptitude for agriculture will even surpass that of their neighbors. Their number amounts to about 600 souls. They have hitherto subsisted by the buffalo chase and other small animals.

3d. The lower Kalispels. Probity, generosity, docility, the love of labor, great courage and piety are among the characteristics of this tribe and in as eminent a degree as their brethren from the upper country. They live on roots, by fishing and by the chase of the small animals such as deer, with herds of which their native mountains are crowded. By means of a few hoes and spades we procured them, they raised last year upward of 400 bags of potatoes, to which, however, they would have no recourse in winter. They kept the whole for seed for the next season. By means of plows and more hoes all were planted last spring and the harvest appears to be very promising. A few open prairies of rather limited extent appear to be very rich in soil and procure beautiful grazing. The winter is here very disagreeable; it snows almost constantly. Last winter there was never less than from two to four feet of snow in the lower prairies. On this account the raising of cattle will here be more difficult.

The Kalispels of the lower country number as many souls as their brethren from above.

The Kalispels and Flatheads have the Blackfeet for neighbors and enemies. However great the perfidy and treachery of the latter, they allow them to pass unmolested, but resist manfully every attack or aggression coming from the Blackfeet. It is a common saying in the mountains that in battle one Flathead or Kalispel is worth five of his enemies. The Blackfeet know it, for they never hazard a combat unless they are superior in numbers to their foes. Notwithstanding their great wickedness and cruelty, there appears to be a change for the better among them. Many have expressed a longing desire to be visited by the Black-robes. Till now they have respected the property of the missionaries among the Flatheads. A missionary will soon penetrate into their extensive country.

4th. The Cœur d'Alènes or Pointed Hearts. The Cœur d'Alènes owe their name to their former cruelty and treachery toward the whites; at present they are of a mild and Christian-like disposition and have listened and embraced with great eagerness the word of God. They inhabit the borders of the great lake which bears their name and from whence the Spokan river flows. They extend their wigwams up two beautiful valleys for about seventy miles, interspersed with small ponds and lakes, forests and plains. These valleys are watered by two large and deep forks, nourishing the great lake, and they in their turn receive the waters of innumerable streams and torrents descending from the lofty Cœur d'Alène Mountains. A waterfall a few miles below prevents in a great measure the discharge of the upper waters. If this obstacle could be conquered, and I believe a few kegs of powder would effect it, the two Cœur d'Alène valleys would become the most delightful portions of the mountains. The vegetable soil lies several feet deep and is most productive; winters are mild and grass is plenty. At present the frequent inundations during the spring and fall render it almost altogether useless. The Indians, however, succeeded last year in raising upward of 1,200 bags of potatoes; some families had each upward of 100 bags. We have procured them a great number of hoes, and the result proves that these have not been idle in their hands. They number upward of 500 souls. Until more tools and plows can be procured they have to live as yet for a great part of the year by fishing, hunting, and digging the edible roots which the kind providence of God has so liberally bestowed on the lands of the poor Indians. A church and several houses have already been built on the spot for a village. The language of the Cœur d'Alènes differs greatly from the Kalispels.

5th. Flatbow and Kootenai Indians. The Kootenai language is altogether different from the language of the above-mentioned tribes. It resembles rather the language of the Blackfeet. They are good and docile and show the greatest kindness and hospitality to all whites who happen to visit their country. They have made frequent applications for Black-robes and a mission is about to be opened among them. Their country is very mountainous, and thickly covered with timber; it offers but few suitable spots for agriculture. The great Kootenai lake abounds in fish. A kind of sturgeon of an enormous size, from eight to twelve feet, is frequently caught in it. Moose, elk, the different kinds of deer, the mountain sheep, the beaver and the otter are as yet very numerous in their country.

We have introduced already in our different stations of the upper Oregon upward of sixty head of cattle, a number of hogs and poultry. All are thriving well and are taken good care of by the Indians.

CHAPTER VI.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE INDIANS.

What the savages wore — A brilliant princess — Love of ornament — Light attire of boys — Cleanliness not a virtue — Domestic arts — The Great Spirit — Warfare and gambling — Management of babies — Training of boys and girls — The pipe, its significance and uses — Delaware tradition.

Indian Costumes.[1]

THE costume of the men consists of a colored shirt; a woolen blanket, white, red or blue: a pair of leggins or gaiters, of red or blue cloth, adorned with silk ribbons of various colors; an *aseeun*, or small piece of blue cloth passed between the legs: slippers of tanned deer skin, adorned with beads and silk ribbons: a bead necklace or a silver crescent, or both together, are often worn, with four or five bracelets of silver on each arm. Ear-rings are common to both sexes. They always carry a big knife in a sheath, attached to a belt which at the same time supports the *aseeun* and the leggins. The head is decorated with a band of tanned hide, which holds back the hair and has feathers stuck in it. This piece is often omitted. The hair is worn very long. Every Indian has two braids, one of which hangs over his face and the other down behind; they are generally adorned with little silver trinkets or with silk ribbons or feathers. They use various colors to paint their faces. A young man who is a recognized hunter, capable of supporting himself, carries a calumet or pipe and a *skipetagun* or tobacco-bag. This bag is usually made of the entire skin of some animal, as the otter, beaver or lynx.

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[1] A hitherto unpublished fragment dating from the Potawatomi period in 1838-9.

with the hair left on. Besides the tobacco it contains a small piece of steel, a fire-stone and a scrap of punk.

On the occasion of the annuities which are paid every year to the Pawnees, all the chiefs come to Bellevue, near Council Bluffs, to receive them. Here is the costume of their women for 1839. The women dress practically alike among all the different nations around us.

Mademoiselle "Pack-Up-and-Get," (that is her name) eldest daughter of the Prince Big Axe, wore for coiffure, when she made her appearance in the great council lodge, the principal feather of the right wing of a female goose and a *bandeau* of blue beads interlaced with small cords. Her shirt of crimson curtain cloth was fastened at the neck with a deer's foot and pizzle, and adorned with seven silver spangles, which might be worth in Belgium a franc apiece. The draperies of this garment descended gracefully to the loins, covering her blue petticoat, which hung to her knees. Her leggins or gaiters were decorated with figures, worked in porcupine quills and embroidered with sky-blue silk. A blue bed-blanket was thrown negligently over the princess' shoulders.

Her Royal Grandeur's moccasins were adorned with little beads of assorted colors, ingeniously worked in the form of toads (*crapaux*). She had employed a great profusion of vermilion to add to the natural pink of her complexion, while Spanish brown and Venetian red had been mingled to paint her hair where it was parted in front. This long growth, the princess' natural ornament, did not cover her shoulders, but was plaited and tied together on the back of her head, as if to display a real and positive phrenological bump.

The princess had been prodigal in her toilet of that perfume so much admired by the Indians, the essence of the skunk, the odor of which is insupportable to civilized noses, an[illegible]hich announced her approach to the assembly, even be[illegible] her form appeared. Her pedigree or totem was easily distinguishable by the figure of a tortoise painted on her blanket. A black and blue spot above the left eyebrow, which the princess had received from the mule of her father, as she was attaching a bundle upon his back, appeared to render her countenance the more interesting.

[2]Let us now say a few words concerning the manners and customs of the Indian nations of the West in general. In all the mountain tribes the costume is nearly the same. The men wear a very long tunic of the skin of the antelope or bighorn; leggins of buckskin or dogskin; shoes of the same material, and a mantle of buffalo skin or a red, blue, green or white flannel blanket. The seams of their garments are adorned with long fringes; they clean them by rubbing them with white earth (it is the soap of the savages). The Indian loves to pile ornament upon ornament; he attaches plumes of every kind to his long hair; the eagle feather always occupies the principal place; it is the great medicine bird, the Manitou or guardian spirit of the savage warrior. They attach besides all sorts of trinkets, ribbons of all colors, rings, shells and ornaments of bone. They wear on their necks collars of pearls interlaced with *apocoins* (an oblong shell that they pick up on the shore of the Pacific ocean). In the morning, all wash themselves; but for lack of a towel they make use of an end of their tunic. Then every one returns to his lodge to make his toilet; that is, to rub his face, hair, arms and chest with bear's grease, over which they spread a thick layer of vermilion, which gives them a wild and hideous aspect; I often thought, when I met them, of those bloated visages that are called in Belgium *vagefuers gezichten* (purgatory faces). Boys of seven to ten years wear a sort of dalmatica of skins, embroidered with porcupine quills and open at both sides, which gives these little fellows an altogether singular appearance, without breeches or shirt. Under the age of seven, they have nothing to cover them during sum-

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[2] From Father De Smet's narrative of his journey to the Flatheads in 1840. Translated from *Voyages aux Montagnes Rocheuses*, pp. 49-54.

mer; they pass whole days in playing in the water or the mire; in winter they are lapped in scraps of leather. The women cover themselves with a big cape, ornamented with elk-teeth and rows of pearls of various colors. This attire makes a handsome effect, on a white and clean skin. A savage takes as great pains in decorating his courser as with his own person; the animal's head, chest and flanks are covered with hangings of scarlet cloth, embroidered with pearls and adorned with long fringes, to which they attach little bells.

It may be said in general that cleanliness is not among the virtues of the savage; it took me some time to become used to them; it will very likely take me more to correct them. Excuse me for going here into some rather disgusting details; any one who thinks himself called to these missions ought to know what he is to meet. I have seen the Cheyennes, Snakes, Utes, etc., eat vermin off each other by the fistfull. Often great chiefs, while they talked to me, would pull off their shirt in my presence without ceremony, and while they chatted would amuse themselves with carrying on this branch of the chase in the seams. As fast as they dislodged the game, they crunched it with as much relish as more civilized mouths crack almonds and hazelnuts or the claws of crabs and crawfishes. Their pots, kettles and dishes, unless they fall in the water by accident, never touch that element to be washed. The women wear a sort of rimless hats, made of straw, very close-woven and gummed; in their lodges, these hats serve them as drinking vessels and soup dishes, and, what will seem incredible to you at first sight, they make use of them even to boil meat in; it is by the aid of heated pebbles that water is made to boil in this sort of pot.

The great ambition of the savage and all his wealth consist in having horses, a fine lodge, a good blanket or cloak and a good gun. Beyond these, there is hardly anything that can tempt him. The only advantage that his horses are to him is that in the chase he can kill as many buffalo as he wishes and bring away a great deal of meat.

The Indians are very skilful in tanning the skins of animals. They remove the flesh with an iron tool with teeth, and the hair with a little pick; then the skin is rubbed with the animal's brains and becomes very soft and workable. They are no less handy in making their bows, of a very elastic wood or of the horn of the deer; their arrows are made of a heavy wood and furnished with iron tips or with a lance-shaped stone; it is astonishing what they will do with these weapons. The horns of the bighorn and buffalo serve them for making cups, dishes and excellent spoons; they soften the horn by cooking it in hot ashes, and thus give it all sorts of forms; as it cools it recovers its first hardness. They make good baskets from willow, bark or straw.

In general, the mountain Indians admit the existence of a Supreme Being, the Great Spirit, Creator of all things, the immortality of the soul and a future life, where man is rewarded or punished according to his deserts. These are the principal points of their belief. Their religious ideas are very limited. They believe that the Great Spirit directs all important events, that he is the author of all good and consequently alone worthy of adoration; that by their evil conduct they draw on themselves his indignation and wrath, and that he sends them calamities to punish them. They say further that the soul enters the other world with the same form that the body bore upon earth. They imagine that their happiness will consist in the enjoyment of abundance of those things which they have most highly prized during life, that the sources of their present happiness will be extended to the point of perfection, and that the punishment of the wicked will consist in a deprivation of all happiness, while the demon will overwhelm them with frightful miseries. This belief in eternal happiness and sorrow varies according to the circumstances of their earthly life.

The savages on the west of the mountains are very peaceable and rarely make war among themselves; they never fight but in self-defense. It is only with the Blackfeet, who dwell to the east, that they often have bloody encounters. These marauders are always on the march, robbing and killing those whom they meet. When the western Indians espy this enemy, they avoid him if it is possible; but if they are compelled to fight, they show a firm and invincible courage and charge upon their foes with the greatest impetuosity. They rush pell-mell upon them uttering their war-cry, discharge their shots and their arrows, lay about them with lance, sword or club, withdraw to reload, return to the charge and brave death in the most cold-blooded manner. They repeat these attacks until the victory is decided. It is commonly said in the mountains that one Flathead or Pend d'Oreille is worth four Blackfeet; when a party of the latter meets one of the Flatheads, equal or superior in numbers, the Blackfoot at once manifests a desire for peace, displays a flag and presents his calumet. The Flathead chief always accepts, but he does not fail to let his enemy understand that he knows what to think of his peaceful intentions. "Blackfoot," he says, "I accept your calumet; but I know very well that your heart desires war, and that your hand is defiled with murder; but I love peace. Let us smoke, since you offer me the calumet, though I am sure that there will soon be fresh bloodshed."

Horse-racing and gambling are among the dominant passions of the Indians, as I have mentioned above. The Indians of the Columbia have carried gambling to the uttermost. After having lost everything that they have, they stake themselves, first one hand, then the other; if they lose these, they put up their arms and so on with all the members of their bodies; the head follows, and if they lose that they become slaves for life, with their wives and children.

The government of an Indian tribe is in the hands of the chiefs, who attain that office by merit or by exploits. Their power consists solely in their influence; it is great or little in proportion to the wisdom, benevolence and courage that they have displayed. The chief does not exercise his authority by command but by persuasion. He never levies taxes; on the contrary, he is so much in the habit of giving away his own property, as well to aid a needy individual as to further the public good, that he is ordinarily one of the poorest in the village. His authority is notwithstanding very great; his wishes are carried out as soon as they are known; his advice is generally followed. If any one is unreasonably obstinate, the voice of the nation quickly brings him to order. I know of no government that allows so great personal liberty, and in which there is at the same time so little of anarchy and so much subordination and devotion.

I have still a word to say of some Indian tribes, neighbors of the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles. North of these last are found the Kootenais; they live on McGillivray's [Kootenai] river, and are represented to be a very interesting people. Their language is different from that of their neighbors, being very sonorous and open, free from gutturals. They are clean, honest and affable and about 1,000 in number.

There are several other savage tribes upon the northwest fork of the Columbia, which resemble each other in customs, morals, manners and language. The principal ones are as follows: On the north of the Kootenais are the Carriers, about 4,000 souls; south of these, the Lake Indians, 500 in number, dwelling on Arrow lake. Still farther south are the Kettles, about 600. West of these are found the Sinpavelist [?], to the number of 1,000; farther down the Shooswaps, 600 souls; west and northwest, the Okinagans, 1,100; and to the north and west are still different nations, of which I have only been able to obtain vague information.

Education.

[8] You ask "when you may hope to see me in Belgium again?" I have a very long journey ahead of me, but

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[8] From a letter of Father De Smet to his niece in February, 1851, written in French.

toward the antipodes of Belgium — the only answer I can give you is to quote from the old "Malbrouck"— "Dieu sait quand il viendra"— you know the rest. * * * You expect, no doubt, that I will tell you something about the savages of America. Here is how they stand in regard to education, which I know is a matter that interests you. The only school in which the Indian youth learn to form their head and heart, is the example of their elders. They give them no preceptors. In the family, the father has charge of the boys, the mother of the girls, and the old proverb, "like father like son," applies more strictly among the Indians than anywhere else. In general, great attention is paid to the physical development of the children and they are prepared from their tenderest infancy for the hardest kind of life. As soon as the child is born, in whatever season, regardless of the severest cold or the greatest heat, they at once plunge it several times into water. Then, suitably wrapped up, it is placed and entrusted in the hands of some other nurse than its mother. After the first week the parents take it back, and it is put into the cradle, or *berceau* — a machine that deserves to be patented, and which the little individual does not leave until he is able to walk. This is the simple construction of it — a small hide-covered board, about a foot longer than its little occupant. The child is placed upon it and tied tightly with bandages, beginning with the legs and covering it to the shoulders; they are made tightest about the loins and the pit of the stomach, in order to force out the chest as much as possible. Neatly arranged in this style, the little party occupies a place in the lodge, out of harm's way. When the weather is fine, he is set in the doorway of the lodge. If the nurse goes away, she hangs the cradle to the branch of a tree, where the baby warms himself tranquilly in the sun, or on hot days is in the shade, and is in no danger from dogs, wolves or snakes, which are often plentiful in the neighborhood. When they travel, the cradle is hung from the saddle-bow, where it is out of the rider's way and offers no danger to the little prisoner.

After he has learned to walk, and up to the time when he can provide for his own subsistence, he remains attached to his parents' lodge, doing no hard work. At about the age of twelve, he begins to take care of his father's band of horses, and to handle the bow or fire-arms in the chase. At sixteen or eighteen he is invested with the honors and responsibilities of the warrior; he shares the labors and takes part in all the amusements of the village elders. The girls enjoy no such liberty as do the boys. They are early made to help their mother in all her labors; they cut and bring in firewood, help prepare the food, which is no small matter among the Indians, who often dine six or eight times a day; mend and make shoes and garments, with a very great number of etceteras, and when a girl is of age, her father sells her for a horse or two and she becomes the slave of a man to whom very likely she may never have spoken.

To his Excellency, M. Edd. Blondeel Van Cuelenbroeck, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of H. M. the King of the Belgians, Washington, D. C.:

University of St. Louis, Feb. 26, 1862.

Monsieur le Ministre.— Upon my return to St. Louis, on the 22d of this month, I immediately set about fulfilling the promise which I had the honor to make you. I have just forwarded to you by express four buffalo robes, of which one is destined for Monsieur the Minister of France. Permit me, Monsieur le Ministre, to seize this occasion to express to you my profound gratitude for all your kindnesses toward me on the occasion of my last stay in Washington. The remembrance of having had the honor of dining at your residence with the great ministers of three great powers will ever abide with me.

The Calumet.

In addition to the buffalo robes, I have sent you my large Indian calumet,[4] which was presented to me by the chiefs of the numerous tribe of the Sioux or Dacotahs, inhabiting the great plains of the west, together with the pipe-case and tobacco-bag, decorated with porcupine quills in the Indian fashion; which I beg you will accept as a little souvenir on my part. If I add here a few remarks and reflections and the history of the tradition of the Great Indian Calumet, it is with the thought, Monsieur le Ministre, that the little narration will give you pleasure.

When the Indians send the calumet to a stranger, it is always a notable sign of good will on their part, of friendship and peace, of respect and gratitude for benefits received.

On all great occasions, in their religious and political ceremonies, and at the great feasts, the calumet presides; the savages send its first fruits, or its first puffs, to the Great Waconda, or Master of Life, to the Sun, which gives them light, and to the earth and water, by which they are nourished; then they direct a puff to each point of the compass, begging of heaven all the elements and favorable winds.

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[4] On two other occasions Father De Smet presented calumets to friends whom he particularly desired to honor. Upon returning from his western journey in 1859, he sent to a "benefactor and friend," Monsieur Massenhove, of Louvain, Belgium, the large and handsomely decorated calumet used by him on that expedition, which was a present to him from the head chief of the Yankton Sioux, Ite-ech-tahe, or Cut Face; and soon after he wrote to the Reverend P. Matthys of that place an account of the use of the instrument, identical with that here given Monsieur Blondeel. Again, on April 20, 1862, he wrote his nephew Charles and his betrothed, bestowing upon them, with appropriate wishes, his large and handsome calumet, then in the possession of Charles' father.

His Hobowakan or Calumet is the object which the American Indian prizes most highly; he who does not own one is in their eyes a very poor wretch. It is very often tastefully and ingeniously decorated and carved. There is nothing in the customs and usages of the Indians so emphatically characteristic as their peculiarities in the matter of smoking. There can be no doubt that it is a very ancient custom, as it seems to be the one that enters most largely into their habits — it is the Alpha and the Omega of all acts to which they attach any importance. Throughout the wilderness, wherever you meet Indians, though they may be suffering from hunger, the first thing they ask for is Sama — tobacco.

There is no allusion in the holy scriptures to the use of tobacco. Herodotus makes no mention of the pipe, nor of the custom of smoking. This may perhaps indicate an occidental origin for them; that they are purely American. It was in fact in 1560, after the discovery of America, that tobacco and the manner of using it were introduced into France, by Nicot; whence the name nicotina.

According to an ancient tradition of the "Lenni-Lennapi," (First People; surnamed Delawares since the arrival of the whites) it is reported that they received the great calumet of peace and brotherhood in the twentieth moon of their existence as a nation. The story told by the elders, or conservators of the national traditions, of the occasion of the calumet being presented to them, is as follows:

Far to the North, there existed a powerful nation. Their warriors were as many as the unnumbered herds of the buffalo upon the vast plains of the West. Their wigwams extended farther than the eye could reach, on the shores of their fair lakes and the banks of their wide and beautiful rivers. The Manitou, whose voice bellows in the clouds and is borne upon the wings of the wind to all parts of the earth, spoke to this great nation and told them that a rival people (the Lenni-Lennapi) held possession of all the country, all the forests and plains, from the Big Water in the east to the great mountains, behind which every evening the sun goes to rest. At this word all the people rose like one man, and the great council was at once assembled, to deliberate upon the pressing danger which appeared to threaten them. It was resolved to invade the land of the Lenni-Lennapi with a strong party of their best warriors, determined to revel in their enemies' hearts, to adorn themselves with scalps and plunder ravished from them, and to force them into the water, there to perish.

In the midst of their preparations for the great war expedition, a large and very beautiful bird, of a dazzling whiteness, appeared to them for the first time. It came forth from the forest, soared into the air and finally came to rest, with outstretched wings, above the head of the only daughter of the head chief. Then this girl heard a voice speaking from the bottom of her heart, which said to her: "Call all the warriors together; make known to them that the heart of the Great Spirit is sad, is covered with a dark and heavy cloud, because they seek to drink the blood of his first-born children, the Lenni-Lennapi, the eldest of all the tribes on earth. To appease the anger of the Master of Life, and to bring back happiness to his heart, all the warriors must wash their hands in the blood of a young fawn; then, loaded with presents, and the Hobowakan in their hands, they must go all together and present themselves to their elder brothers; they must distribute their gifts, and smoke together the great calumet of peace and brotherhood, which is to make them one forever."

This is the little tradition of the Hobowakan among the Lenni-Lennapi, as given me by the son of the head chief of the tribe.[6] The calumet presides at all their gatherings, in all their councils with their neighbors, at the ratification of all their treaties, their religious festivals and friendly feasts. Any one who refuses to smoke from the calumet is excluded from taking any part and is obliged to withdraw.

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[6] No doubt Watomika — Reverend Father Beschor, S. J.

To refuse to accept the calumet, as between two different tribes, is equivalent to a declaration of war, and on the other hand, to accept it is always, among the savages, a sign of good harmony, fraternity and mutual charity, ready to aid one another in case of need.

It is quite probable that I shall return, about the beginning of May, among my dear children of the plains.

I have the honor to be, with sentiments of the profoundest respect and the most sincere esteem,

Monsieur le Ministre, etc.

Reverend Father:[8]

I shall here give you the remarks and observations I have made, and the information I have gathered, during this last journey, concerning some customs and practices of the savages.

In speaking of the animals, I inquired of seven Flatheads, who were present, how many buffalo they had killed between them in their last hunt? The number amounted to 189 — one alone had killed fifty-nine. One of the Flatheads told me of three remarkable coups which had distinguished him in that chase. He pursued a cow, armed merely with a stone, and killed her by striking her while running, between the horns; he afterward killed a second with his knife; and finished his exploits by spearing and strangling a large bull. The young warriors frequently exercise themselves in this manner, to show their agility, dexterity and strength. He who spoke looked like a Hercules. They then (a rare favor, for they are not boasters) kindly showed me the scars left by the balls and arrows of the Blackfeet in their different encounters. One of them bore the scars of four balls which had pierced his thigh; the only consequence of which was a little stiffness of the leg, scarcely perceptible. Another had his arm and breast pierced by a ball. A third, beside some wounds from a knife and spear, had an arrow five inches deep in his belly. A fourth had still two balls in his body. One among them, a cripple, had his leg broken by a ball sent by an enemy concealed in a hole; leaping on one leg he fell upon the Blackfoot, and the hiding place of the foe became his grave. "These Blackfeet," I remarked, "are terrible people." The Indian who last spoke replied in the sense of the words of Napoleon's grenadier, "Oui, mais ils meurent vite après." I expressed a desire to know the medicines which they used in such cases; they, much surprised at my question, replied, laughing, "we apply nothing to our wounds, they close of themselves." This recalled to me the reply of Captain Bridger in the past year. He had had, within four years, two quivers-full of arrows [*Fr. deux armures de flèches:*— two arrowheads?] in his body. Being asked if the wounds had been long suppurating, he answered humorously, "in the mountains meat never spoils."

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[8] Letter to a Father of the Society of Jesus, dated St. Mary's, December 30, 1841. Published as Letter X, *Voyages aux Montagnes-Rocheuses* and Letter XI, *Letters and Sketches*. The latter text, which is apparently translated from the French, is here followed.

The Indians who live on Clark's river are of the middle size. The women are very filthy. Their faces, hands and feet are black and stiff with dirt. They rub them every morning with a composition of red and brown earth mixed up with fish oil. Their hair, always long and disheveled, serves them for a towel to wipe their hands on. Their garment is generally tattered, and stiff and shining with dust and grease. They seem to be less subjected to slavish labor than the squaws that live east of the mountains, still they have to toil hard, and to do whatever is most difficult. They are obliged to carry all the household furniture or to row the canoe when they move from one place to another; at home, they fetch the wood and the water, clean the fish, prepare the meals, gather the roots and fruits of the season, and when any leisure time is left, they spend it in making mats, baskets and hats of bull-rushes. What must appear rather singular is, that the men more frequently handle the needle than the squaws. Their chief occupations, however, are fishing and hunting. These Indians suffer much from ophthalmic affections. Scarcely a cabin is to be found on Clark's river, in which there is not a blind or one-eyed person, or some one laboring under some disease of the eye. This probably proceeds from two causes — first, because they are frequently on the water and exposed from morning till night to the direct and reflected rays of the sun, and next, because living in low cabins made of bull-rushes, the large fire they make in the centre fills it with smoke, which must gradually injure their eyes.

Conjurers are found here as well as in some parts of Europe. They are a kind of physicians. Whatever may be the complaint of the patient these gentlemen have him stretched out on his back, and his friends and relatives are ordered to stand round him, each one armed with two sticks of unequal length. The doctor or conjurer neither feels the pulse nor looks at the tongue, but with a solemn countenance commences to sing some mournful strain, whilst those present accompany him with their voices and beat time with the sticks. During the singing the doctor operates on the patient, he kneels before him, and placing his closed fists on the stomach, leans on him with all his might. Excessive pain makes the patient roar, but his roarings are lost in the noise, for the doctor and the bystanders raise their voices higher in proportion as the sick man gives utterance to his sufferings. At the end of each stanza the doctor joins his hands, applies them to the patient's lips, and blows with all his strength. This operation is repeated till at last the doctor takes from the patient's mouth, either a little white stone or the claw of some bird or animal, which he exhibits to the bystanders, protesting that he has removed the cause of the disease, and that the patient will soon recover. But whether he recover or die, the quack is here as elsewhere rewarded for his exertions. *Mundus vult decipi*, is the watchword of quacks, jugglers and mountebanks;

and it seems that the Indian conjurers are not unacquainted with it. I received this description of their method of curing diseases from a clerk of the Hudson Bay Company. I shall subjoin another anecdote concerning the religious ideas entertained by the Chinooks. All men, they say, were created by a divinity called *Etalapasse,* but they were created imperfect or unfinished. Their mouths were not cleft, their eyes were closed, and their hands and feet were immovable; so that they were rather living lumps of flesh than men. Another divinity, whom they call *Ecannum* (resembling the *Nanaboojoo* of the Potawatomies), less powerful, but more benevolent than the former, seeing the imperfect state of these men, took a sharp stone and with it opened their mouths and eyes. He also gave motion to their hands and feet. This merciful divinity did not rest satisfied with conferring these first favors on the human race. He taught them to make canoes and paddles, nets and all the implements now used by the Indians. He threw large rocks into the rivers to obstruct their courses, and confine the fish in order that the Indians might catch them in larger quantities.

When I speak of the Indian character, I do not mean to include the Indians that live in the neighborhood of civilized man, and have intercourse with him. It is acknowledged in the United States that the whites who trade with those Indians, not only demoralize them by the sale of spirituous liquors, but communicate to them their own vices, of which some are shocking and revolting to nature. The Indian left to himself is circumspect and discreet in his words and actions. He seldom gives way to passion; except against the hereditary enemies of his nation. When there is question of them, his words breathe hatred and vengeance. He seeks revenge, because he firmly believes that it is the only means by which he can retrieve his honor when he has been insulted or defeated; because he thinks that only low and vulgar minds can forget an injury, and he fosters rancor because he deems it a virtue. With respect to others, the Indian is cool and dispassionate, checking the least violent emotion of his heart. Thus should he know that one of his friends is in danger of being attacked by an enemy lying in wait for him, he will not openly tell him so (for he would deem this an act of fear), but will ask him where he intends to go that day, and after having received an answer, will add with the same indifference, that a wild beast lies hidden on the way. This figurative remark will render his friend as cautious as if he were acquainted with all the designs and movements of the enemy.

Thus again, if an Indian has been hunting without success, he will go to the cabin of one of his friends, taking care not to show the least sign of disappointment or impatience, nor to speak of the hunger which he suffers. He will sit down and smoke the calumet with as much indifference as if he had been successful in the chase. He acts in the same manner when he is among strangers. To give signs of disappointment or impatience, is looked upon by the Indians as a mark of cowardice, and would earn for them the appellation of "old woman," which is the most injurious and degrading epithet that can be applied to an Indian. If an Indian be told that his children have distinguished themselves in battle — that they have taken several scalps, and have carried off many enemies and horses, without giving the least sign of joy, he will answer: "They have done well." If he be informed that they have been killed or made prisoners, he will utter no complaint, but will simply say: "It is unfortunate." He will make no inquiries into the circumstances; several days must elapse before he asks for further information.

The Indian is endowed with extraordinary sagacity, and easily learns whatever demands application. Experience and observation render him conversant with things that are unknown to the civilized man. Thus, he will traverse a plain or forest 100 or 200 miles in extent, and will arrive at a particular place with as much precision as the mariner by the aid of the compass. Unless prevented by obstacles, he, without any material deviation, always travels in a straight line, regardless of path or road. In the same manner he will point out the exact place of the sun, when it is hidden by mists or clouds. Thus, too, he follows with the greatest accuracy the traces of men or animals, though these should have passed over the leaves or the grass, and nothing be perceptible to the eye of the white man. He acquires this knowledge from a constant application of the intellectual faculties, and much time and experience are required to perfect this perceptive quality. Generally speaking, he has an excellent memory. He recollects all the articles that have been concluded upon in their councils and treaties, and the exact time when such councils were held or such treaties ratified.

Some writers have supposed that the Indians are guided by instinct, and have even ventured to assert that their children would find their way through the forests as well as those further advanced in age. I have consulted some of the most intelligent Indians on this subject, and they have uniformly told me that they acquire this practical knowledge by long and close attention to the growth of plants and trees, and to the sun and stars. It is known that the north side of a tree is covered with a greater quantity of moss than any other, and that the boughs and foliage on the south side are more abundant and luxuriant. Similar observations tend to direct them, and I have more than once found their reflections useful to myself in the excursions I have made through the forests. Parents teach their children to remark such things, and these in their turn sometimes add new discoveries to those of their fathers. They measure distances by a day's journey. When an Indian travels alone, his day's journey will be about fifty or sixty English miles, but only fifteen or twenty when he moves with the camp. They divide their journeys, as we do the hours, into halves and quarters; and when in their councils they decide on war or on distant excursions, they lay off these journeys with astonishing accuracy on a kind of map, which they trace on bark or skins. Though they have no knowledge of geography, nor of any science that relates to it, yet they form with sufficient accuracy maps of the countries which they know; nothing but the degrees of longitude and latitude are wanting in some to make them exact. To travel by the polestar is the extent of their astronomy.

I remember to have read in Father Charlevoix' journal that the Indians are remarkably superstitious with respect to dreams. This is still the case, though they interpret them in various ways. Some maintain that during sleep the rational part of the soul travels about, whilst the sensitive continues to animate the body. Others say that the good Manitou or familiar spirit gives salutary advice concerning the future, whilst others hold that in sleep the soul visits the objects about which she dreams. But all look upon dreams as sacred, and as the ordinary channels through which the Great Spirit and the Manitous communicate their designs to man. Impressed with this idea, the Indian is at a loss to conceive why we disregard them. As they look upon dreams as representations of the desires of some unearthly genius, or of the commands of the Great Spirit, they deem themselves bound to observe and obey them. Charlevoix tells us somewhere, and I have seen instances of a similar kind, that an Indian who had dreamed that he had cut off his finger, actually cut it, and prepared himself for the act by a fast. Another having dreamed that he was a prisoner among a hostile nation, not knowing how to act, consulted the jugglers, and according to their decision, had himself bound to a stake, and fire applied to several parts of his body. I doubt whether the quotation is correct, as I have not the work of Charlevoix to consult, but I know that I have described a superstitious belief which is generally held by the Indians of the present day. Among the Crows I saw a warrior who, in consequence of a dream, had put on women's clothing and subjected himself to all the labors and duties of that condition, so humiliating to an Indian. On the other hand there is a woman among the

Snakes who once dreamed that she was a man and killed animals in the chase. Upon waking, she assumed her husband's garments, took his gun and went out to test the virtue of her dream; she killed a deer. Since that time she has not left off man's costume; she goes on the hunts and on the war-path; by some fearless actions she has obtained the title of "brave" and the privilege of admittance to the council of the chiefs. Nothing less than another dream could make her return to her gown.

When the Potawatomies or any of the northern nations make or renew a treaty of peace, they present a wampum sash or collar. The wampum is made of a shell called buccinum, and shaped into small beads in the form of pearls. When they conclude an alliance, offensive or defensive, with other tribes, they send them a wampum sash and tomahawk dipped in blood, inviting them to come and drink of the blood of their enemies. This figurative expression often becomes a reality. Among the nations of the West the calumet is looked upon with equal reverence, whether in peace or war. They smoke the calumet to confirm their treaties and alliances. This smoking is considered a solemn engagement, and he who should violate it would be deemed unworthy of confidence, infamous and an object of divine vengeance. In time of war the calumet and all its ornaments are red. Sometimes it is partly red and partly of some other color. By the color and the manner of disposing the feathers, a person acquainted with their practices knows at first sight what are the designs or intentions of the nation that presents the calumet.

The smoking of the calumet forms a part of all their religious ceremonies. It is a kind of sacred rite which they perform when they prepare themselves to invoke the Great Spirit, and take the sun and moon, the earth and the water as witnesses of the sincerity of their intentions, and the fidelity with which they promise to comply with their engagements. However ridiculous this custom of smoking may appear to some, it has a good effect among the Indians.

Experience has taught them that the smoke of the calumet dispels the vapors of the brain, aids them to think and judge with greater accuracy and precision, and excites their courage. This seems to be the principal reason why they have introduced it into their councils, where it is looked upon as the seal of their decisions. It is also sent as a pledge of fidelity to those whom they wish to consult, or with whom they desire to form an alliance. I know that the opinions of the Indians concerning the beneficial effects of smoking the calumet will be sanctioned by few persons, because it is demonstrated from experience that the smoke of tobacco acts as a powerful narcotic upon the nervous system, and produces soporific and debilitating effects; but it should be remembered that such effects are not produced when the smoke is inhaled into the lungs, as is the universal practice of the Indians.

The funeral ceremonies of the Calkobins [Talkotins?], who inhabit New Caledonia, west of the mountains, are fantastic and revolting. Mr. Cox, in his journal, tells us that the body of the deceased is exposed in his lodge for nine days, and on the tenth is burned. They choose for this purpose an elevated place, and there erect a funeral pile. In the meanwhile, they invite their neighbors from all sides, entreating them to repair to the ceremony. All the preparations being completed, the corpse is placed on the pile, which they light, while the spectators manifest the greatest joy. All that the deceased possessed is placed around the body; and if he be a person of distinction, his friends purchase for him a cloak, a shirt, and a pair of breeches: these are laid beside him. The medicine man must be present, and, for the last time, has recourse to his enchantments, to recall the departed to life. Not succeeding, he covers the dead body — that is, he makes a present of a piece of cloth, or leather, and thus appeases the anger of the relatives, and escapes the vengeance they have a right to inflict upon him. During the nine days on which the corpse is exposed, the widow is obliged to remain near it from the rising to the setting of the sun; and, notwithstanding the excessive heats of summer, no relaxation is allowed from this barbarous custom. While the doctor is occupied in his last operation, the widow must lie down beside the corpse, until he orders her to withdraw from the pile; and this order is not given until the unfortunate being is covered with blisters. She then is made to pass and repass her hands through the flames, to collect the fat, which flows from the body: with this she rubs her person. When the friends of the deceased observe that the sinews of the legs and arms begin to contract, they force the miserable widow to return to the pile, and straighten the limbs.

If, during the lifetime of the husband, the woman had been unfaithful to him, or had neglected to provide for his wants, his relations then revenge themselves upon her; they throw her upon the pile, from whence she is dragged by her own relations. She is again cast upon it, and again withdrawn, until she falls into a state of insensibility.

The body being consumed, the widow gathers together the largest bones; these she incloses in a birch box, which she is forced to carry for many years. She is looked upon while in this state as a slave; the hardest and most laborious work falls to her lot; she must obey every order of the women, and even of the children; and the least disobedience or repugnance draws down upon her severe chastisement. The ashes of her husband are deposited in a tomb, and it is her duty to remove from thence the weeds. These unhappy women frequently destroy themselves to avoid so many cruelties. At the end of three or four years the relatives agree to put an end to her mourning. They prepare a great feast for this occasion, and invite all the neighbors. The widow is then introduced, still carrying the bones of the husband; these are taken from her, and shut up in a coffin, which is fastened at the end of a stake about twelve feet long. All the guests extol her painful widowhood; one of whom pours upon her head a vessel of oil, whilst another covers her with down. It is only after this ceremony that the widow can marry again; but, as may be readily supposed, the number of those who hazard a second marriage is very small.

Cœur D'Alène Hunting.[7]

The Indians watch for the proper time to go all together for a hunt or "surround" of deer. They wait until the mountains are covered with three to five feet of snow and the deer have been driven down to the valleys, where they pass the winter, feeding on moss off the trees, the tenderer branches of the underbrush and shoots of the herbs and plants.

This happened soon after the feasts of Christmas [1858], and all our hunters started out, taking only a few mats made of rushes to shelter them against bad weather and the nocturnal cold, and also blankets or buffalo skins to wrap themselves in.

They choose by preference the neighborhood of some lake or river which is not yet frozen over; and they determine the extent of the surround, according to the number of hunters of which the band is composed. A hunting-chief is chosen, and all his orders are thereafter executed promptly and punctually. On both ends of their line they light fires, some distance apart, which they feed with old garments and worn-out moccasins. The hunters are now formed in a long curved line, something like a half-moon. At a given signal, they utter the hunting-cry and move forward. The frightened deer rush to right and left to escape. As soon as they smell the smoke of the fires, they turn and run back. Having the fires on both sides of them and the hunters in their rear, they dash toward the lake, and soon they are so closely pressed that they jump into the water, as the only refuge left them. Then everything is easy for the hunters: they let the animals get away from the shore, then pursue them in their light bark-canoes and kill them without trouble or danger.

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[7] From the French of the third Belgian edition, vol. IV. Dated St. Louis, April 3, 1861.

When the "surround" is performed in a valley at a distance from water, the hunters form a complete circle, determining the size of it by their own number. Then they practice the same stratagem, burning their old rags in a hundred little fires round about, to prevent the deer from escaping from the circle. Pursued in every direction, the terrified animals flee from one clump of wood or brush to another, until finally, enveloped on all sides and finding no issue, they fall into the hands of the hunters. It is seldom that a deer escapes them. It follows also that the hunters themselves are considerably endangered. In the eagerness and excitement of such a chase, bullets and arrows are liable to fly wild or glance, and do mischief.

When the snow is very deep in the valleys, and has taken on a crust, sufficient to bear the hunter on his snowshoes, then hunting is a veritable joke to him; the whole herd of deer is soon captured, from the least even unto the greatest. The poor beasts soon become exhausted in the snow and have no chance to escape. They are easily killed with clubs, lances and even knives. A young Indian who was at the Sacred Heart Mission assured me that, without weapon of any kind, he simply jumped on the deer's back, grasped his horns and twisted his neck. He killed eight in this way, in the present hunt.

Sometimes as many as 200 to 300 are killed in a single surround. Ordinarily, however, the number is less. After the hunt, the flesh of the deer is divided among all the families by the chief of the tribe, or by him who has managed the expedition. The portions are regulated according to the number of persons constituting the different families. The hunter who kills the animal has sole right to the skin.

In winter, the hunts are generally made in common.

Bears are as numerous in the Cœur d'Alène countries as in the other mountainous districts. Often the Indians come upon their tracks or ravages while looking for their food-roots: the earth may be trampled, branches of trees broken or the bark scratched by the redoubtable animals.

The bear is hunted in various manners. In winter, it is not very dangerous. The bear is shut up in his den, either alone or, more frequently, with one or two others, remaining several months entirely torpid, only rarely going out to drink; but the trail that they make from their den to the water betrays them, and allows the hunter to discover, pursue and approach them with ease. Bears are generally found in the hollow of some big tree or in a hole in the rocks. The entrance is usually nearly closed. The hunter makes a hole large enough to permit him to make investigations and take the proper measures. In most cases he takes a long stick and feels around until he finds out where the animal lies. If it is a deep hole, he sets fire to a bunch of pitchy twigs on the end of a pole, to reconnoitre the hole and the position of its dangerous occupant. These precautions are necessary to guarantee the success of the shot. Sometimes it even happens that a very bold hunter will go into the cavity, when it is a rock den, and kill his prey at arm's length or with his knife.

There were two Indians at the mission, when I was there, who certainly had earned hunters' diplomas. One assured me that he had killed eleven grizzlies and seventy black or brown bears; the other had killed over 100 bears, and both without running excessive danger. They told me some interesting particulars, as for instance that the skin of the bear is only bad in summer, when the hair has no firmness. In spring, the bear feeds on roots and herbs; he is especially fond of the leaves of a plant that resembles our cabbage. He also eats with avidity the worms that he finds under stumps or rocks, often lifting very large stones in search of them, since his strength is prodigious. In autumn, he subsists principally on berries from the low bushes, and he is so greedy for them that at this time it is easy to approach him. When a hunter finds a bear's track, or the path worn by the animal, he lies in wait in some suitable place, arranging so as to be certain of his prey.

The Indians I have mentioned may be ranked among the more fortunate hunters. "A great many others," they told me, "have not had the same success, and have come back from the bear-hunt with a broken leg or arm, mutilated, wounded and bruised all over. Many have lost their lives."

Bears are exceedingly dangerous when they have young ones or when they feel themselves wounded. Then they will attack or defend themselves against the aggressor, and they are very ferocious. Aside from these cases, when a bear meets a man and the man lets him alone, he will not be the first to begin an attack; he goes his way and lets the stranger pass in peace. *Experto crede Roberto;* I have tried it frequently myself. It is true, to be sure, that *the fear of man is characteristic of all animals.* It is a prerogative which the Creator bestowed upon him at the beginning.

The *Ursus gulo,* carcajou or wolverine is ordinarily found in the Arctic regions as far as the seventy-fifth degree. He appears in the various sections of the Rocky Mountains, including that in which I was this winter [1858–59]. He may be called the Torment of the mountain traveler, and especially of the beaver-hunter, who considers the wolverine his greatest enemy and has always to keep on his guard against him. The reason is this. When the carcajou discovers a *cache* of provisions or skins, he devours the first with pleasure and destroys the second. He also destroys the steel traps that are set around here and there to take other animals; and I am assured that when he cannot manage this, he carries them off and hides them in the branches or hollow trunk of a tree. His strength is prodigious. Although not large, and with very short legs, he will carry or drag a large deer a long distance. But cunning as he is, man is his superior, and the carcajou falls into his snares like all the others.

I have spoken in other places of the buffalo, elk, moose, bighorn, antelope and the various ways in which they are hunted. I have only a few words more to say concerning other animals which dwell in these parts, and the manner of taking them.

Foxes are very numerous in this country, and there are several kinds of them. The skin of the silver fox is very valuable; those of the otter and beaver are highly prized. Skins of the marten, muskrat and little white ermine are in commercial demand. The rabbit, hare, prairie and wood squirrel, large and small wolf, badger, skunk, ring-tailed badger or *rat des bois* [opossum?] which lives on crawfishes and small fish; all these animals have skins of little value, and the Indians generally use them to make hoods, gloves and collars. All these animals are usually taken either in steel traps or in snares of various fashions with diverse baits.

Man is great wherever he is found. He is the king of nature, according to the Creator's design; but unfortunately he often forgets the grandeur of his origin and destiny; and while he is clearly the master of the beasts, he is, alas! the slave of his own passions.

The Buffalo Chase.

Reverend and very dear Father:[8]

According to promise, I proceed to offer you the description of a hunt. If I succeed in making my narration intelligible, I shall be satisfied, and shall not regret devoting my time to the writing of it.

To be a good hunter and a good warrior are the two qualities *par excellence* that constitute a great man among all the nomadic tribes of North America. In this communication I shall limit myself to the manner of conducting a hunt.

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[8] To the editor of the *Précis Historiques*, Brussels. Dated College of St. Xavier, Cincinnati, O., August 3, 1854. Published as Letters XI and XII *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres*, thence translated as Letters XI and XII, Second Series, *Western Missions and Missionaries*. The latter text is here followed.

The chase absorbs the whole attention of the savage. The knowledge that he has acquired, by long experience, of the nature and instinct of animals, is truly marvelous. He is occupied with it from his tender infancy. As soon as a child is capable of managing a little bow, it is the first instrument his father puts into his hands, to teach him how to hunt little birds and small animals. The young Indians are initiated in all their stratagems. They are taught with as much care how to approach and kill the animals, as in civilized society a youth is instructed in reading, writing and arithmetic.

An expert Indian hunter is acquainted minutely with the habits and instincts of all the quadrupeds which form the object of the chase. He knows their favorite haunts. It is essential for him to distinguish what kind of food an animal first seeks, and the most favorable moment of quitting his lair for procuring nourishment. The hunter must be familiar with all the precautions that are necessary to elude the attentive ear and watchful instincts of his intended victims; he must appreciate the footstep that has passed him, the time that has elapsed since it passed, and the direction it has pursued. The atmosphere, the winds, rain, snow, ice, forests and the water are the books which the Indian reads, consults and examines, on leaving his cabin in pursuit of game.

The tribes of the desert find their subsistence in the chase; the flesh of animals affords them food, and the skins clothing. Before the arrival of the whites, the method of killing the different species of animals was very simple, consisting ordinarily of stratagems and snares. They still have recourse to the primitive method in the hunt for large animals, when they have no horses capable of pursuing them, and powder and ball for killing them are wanting.

The trap prepared for the bison is an inclosure or pen, and is one of the more early ways, and perhaps the most remarkable in its execution; it demands skill, and gives a high idea of the sagacity, activity and boldness of the Indian. As on all other occasions of moment, the jugglers are consulted, and the hunt is preceded by a great variety of superstitious practices. I witnessed one of these hunts at the base of the Rocky Mountains, and of this I will endeavor to give you a faithful detail.

The bisons roam the prairies in herds of several hundreds, and often of several thousands. On many of my travels I have seen with my own eyes, as far as I could discern on these immense plains, thousands and thousands of these noble animals moving slowly, like an interminable troop, in one direction, and browsing the grass as they progress. They have a fearful appearance; their hairy heads inspire with terror those who are ignorant of the pacific habits of this noble quadruped. Indeed, such is their timidity that one man can put to flight the most numerous herd. When alarmed, the tramp of their hoofs, their bellowings and the columns of dust which they raise, resemble the deep murmurs of a tempest mingled with peals of thunder, lessening as they grow more remote. The flesh of the bison is much esteemed and very nourishing; it is deemed the daily bread of all the Indian tribes on the great plains.

A tribe that has few guns, few horses to run down the animals, which needs provisions, and skins for clothing (and such was the condition of our Assiniboins), must employ the old or primitive method of hunting, which has existed from time immemorial.

The Indians whom I saw engaged in it were encamped on a suitable place for the construction of a park or inclosure. The camp of which I speak contained about 300 lodges, which represent 2,000 or 3,000 souls. They had selected the base of a chain of hills, whose gentle slope presented a narrow valley and a prairie, in which all the lodges were ranged. Opposite the hills there was a fine large prairie.

After the construction of the lodges, a great council is held, at which all the chiefs and all the hunters assist. They first choose a band of warriors to hinder the hunters from leaving camp, either alone or in detached companies, lest the bisons be disturbed, and thus be driven away from the encampment. The law against this is extremely severe; not only all the Indians of the camp must conform to it, but it reaches to all travelers, even when they are ignorant of the encampment or do not know that there is a hunt in contemplation. Should they frighten the animals, they are also punishable; however, those of the camp are more rigorously chastised in case they transgress the regulation. Their guns, their bows and arrows are broken, their lodges cut in pieces, their dogs killed, all their provisions and their hides are taken from them. If they are bold enough to resist the penalty, they are beaten with bows, sticks and clubs, and this torment frequently terminates in the death of the unhappy aggressor. Any one who should set fire to the prairie by accident or imprudence, or in any way frighten off the herd, would be sure to be well beaten.

As soon as the law is promulgated, the construction of the pen is commenced. Everybody labors at it with cheerful ardor, for it is an affair of common interest, on which the subsistence of the entire tribe during several months will depend. The pen has an area of about an acre. To inclose it in a circular form, stakes are firmly fixed in the ground, and the distance between them filled with logs, dry boughs, masses of stone — in short, with whatever they can find that will answer the purpose. The circular palisade has but one opening; before this opening is a slope embracing fifteen or twenty feet between the hills: this inclined plane grows wider as it diverges from the circle; at its two sides they continue the fence to a long distance on the plain.

As soon as these preparations are completed, the Indians elect a grandmaster of ceremonies and of the pen. He is generally an old man, a distinguished personage, belonging to the Wah-kon, or medicine band, and famous in the art of jugglery, which the Indians, as I have remarked, deem a supernatural science. His office it is to decide the moment for driving the bisons into the inclosure, and give the signal for the commencement of the hunt. He plants the medicine-mast in the centre of the park, and attaches to it the three charms which are to allure the animals in that direction, viz., a streamer of scarlet cloth two or three yards long, a piece of tobacco and a bison's horn. Every morning at the early dawn he beats his drum, intones his hymns of conjuration, consults his own Wah-kon and the manitous or guiding-spirits of the bisons, in order to discover the favorable moment for the chase.

The grandmaster has four runners at his disposal, who go out daily and report to him the true result of their observations; they tell at what distance from the camp the animals are, their probable number, and in what direction the herd is marching. These runners frequently go forty or fifty miles in different directions. In all their courses they take with them a Wah-kon ball, which is intrusted to them by the grandmaster; it is made of buffalo hair and covered with skin. When the runners think that the suitable moment has arrived, they immediately dispatch a man of their number to the grandmaster, with the ball and the good news. So long as the mysterious ball is absent, the master of ceremonies cannot take food; he prolongs this rigorous fast by abstaining from every meat or dish that does not come from some animal killed on the area of the park, until the hunt is over; and as they often remain a month or more awaiting the most favorable moment of beginning, the grandmaster must find himself reduced to very small rations, unless he makes some arrangement with his conscience. It is probable that he eats stealthily at night, for he has no more appearance of fasting than his brethren of the camp.

Let us now suppose all to be in readiness, and the circumstances all favorable to the hunt. The grandmaster of the park beats his drum, to announce that the bisons are in numerous herds at about fifteen or twenty miles distance. The wind is favorable, and comes directly from the point in which the animals are. Immediately all the horsemen mount their coursers; the foot soldiers, armed with bows, guns and lances, take their positions, forming two long oblique diverging rows, from the extremity of the two barriers which spring from the entrance of the pen and extend into the plain, and thus prolong the lines of the inclosure. When the footmen are placed at distances of ten or fifteen feet, the horsemen continue the same lines, which separate in proportion as they extend, so that the last hunter on horseback is found at about two or three miles distance from the pen, and at very nearly the same distance from the last hunter of the other line, in an opposite direction. When men are wanting, women and even children occupy stations.

After the formation of these two immense lines, one single Indian, unarmed, is sent upon the best courser in the camp in the direction of the buffalo, to meet them. He approaches against the wind and with the greatest precaution. At the distance of about 100 paces he envelops himself in a buffalo hide, the fur turned outside, and also envelops his horse as much as possible in the same manner, and then makes a plaintive cry in imitation of that of a bison calf. As if by enchantment, this cry attracts the attention of the whole herd; after some seconds, several thousands of these quadrupeds, hearing this pitiful plaint, turn toward the pretended calf. At first they move slowly, then advance into a trot, and at last they push forward in full gallop. The horseman continually repeats the cry of the calf, and takes his course toward the pen, ever attentive to keep at the same distance from the animals that are following him. By this stratagem he leads the vast herd of bisons through the whole distance that separates him from his companions, who are on the *qui vive,* full of ardor and impatience to share with him in his sport.

When the buffalo arrive in the space between the extremities of the two lines, the scene changes; all assumes an appearance of eagerness. The hunters on horseback, giving rein to their steeds, rejoin each other behind the animals.

At once the scent of the hunters is communicated among the frightened and routed animals, which attempt to escape in every direction. Then those on foot appear. The bisons, finding themselves surrounded and inclosed on all sides, except the single opening into the circular pen before them, low and bellow in the most frightful manner, and plunge into it with the speed of fear and desperation. The lines of hunters close in gradually; and space becomes less necessary as the mass of bisons and the groups of hunters become more and more compact. Then the Indians commence firing their guns, drawing their arrows and flinging their lances. Many animals fall under the blows before gaining the pen: the greater number, however, enter. They discover, only too late, the snare that has been laid for them. Those in front try to return, but the terrified crowd that follow force them to go forward, and they cast themselves in confusion into the inclosure, amid the hurrahs and joyful shouts of the whole tribe, intermingled with the firing of guns.

As soon as all are penned, the buffalo are killed with arrows, lances and knives. Men, women and children, in an excitement of joy, take part in the general butchery and the flaying and cutting up of the animals. To look at them without disgust in this operation, one must have been a little habituated to their customs and manners. While men cut and slash the flesh, the women, and children in particular, devour the meat still warm with life — the livers, kidneys, brains, etc., seems irresistible attractions: they smear their faces, hair, arms and legs with the blood of the bisons; confused cries, clamorous shouts, and here and there quarrels, fill up the scene. It is a picturesque and savage scene, a very pandemonium — a sight very difficult to depict by words or to recount in minute details. In the hunt which I have just described, and at which I was present, 600 bison were taken.

After the butchery, the skins and the flesh are separated into piles, and these piles are divided among the families, in proportion to the number of which they are composed. The meat is afterward cut in slices and dried; the bones are bruised and their grease extracted. The dogs also receive their portion of the feast, and devour the remains on the arena of the pen. Two days after the hunt not a vestige of the carnage remained. Before separating, the Indians pass several days in dancing and mirth. One of your Keysers or Verbœckhovens should assist at one of these spirited, picturesque scenes of the Great Desert; he would find a new subject for a painting.

The old proverb says, "One half of the world knows not how the other half lives." The American Indians, who live on the spontaneous products of the soil, may say as much: the countless herds of bison that roam over the vast plains, serve as daily bread to the numerous tribes of the Great Desert.

The Soshocos are the most degraded of the races of this vast continent. The Americans call them "Poor Devils," and the French and Canadian *voyageurs* denominated them "les dignes de pitié." They roam over the desert and barren districts of Utah and California, and that portion of the Rocky Mountains which branches into Oregon. In my missions and journeys I have sometimes met with families of these wretched Soshocos; they are really worthy of pity. I was so happy as to baptize several of their sick children just before they died.

While the Indians of the plains, who live on the flesh of animals, are tall, robust, active and generally well-clad with skins, the Soshoco, who subsists chiefly on grasshoppers and ants, is miserable, lean, weak and badly clothed; he inspires sentiments of compassion in the minds of those who traverse the unproductive region which he occupies.

After having described to you the inclosure hunt, as practiced by the Assiniboins, I will show you the reverse of the picture, by describing the great grasshopper hunt[*] practiced among the Soshocos. This hunt deserves mention, I think, especially as a contrast to the other.

[*] Fr. la grande chasse aux sauterelles: "the grasshopper surround."

The Grasshopper Hunt.

The principal portion of the Soshoco territory is covered with wormwood, and other species of artemisia, in which the grasshoppers swarm by myriads; these parts are consequently most frequented by this tribe. When they are sufficiently numerous, they hunt together. They begin by digging a hole, ten or twelve feet in diameter by four or five deep; then, armed with long branches of artemisia, they surround a field of four or five acres, more or less, according to the number of persons who are engaged in it. They stand about twenty feet apart, and their whole work is to beat the ground, so as to frighten up the grasshoppers and make them bound forward. They chase them toward the centre by degrees — that is, into the hole prepared for their reception. Their number is so considerable that frequently three or four acres furnish grasshoppers sufficient to fill the reservoir or hole.

The Soshocos stay in that place as long as this sort of provision lasts. They, as well as other mortals, have their tastes. Some eat the grasshoppers in soup, or boiled; others crush them, and make a kind of paste from them, which they dry in the sun or before the fire: others eat them *en appalas* — that is, they take pointed rods and string the largest ones on them; afterward these rods are fixed in the ground before the fire, and, as they become roasted, the poor Soshocos regale themselves until the whole are devoured.

As they rove from place to place, they sometimes meet with a few rabbits, and take some grouse, but seldom kill deer or other large animals.

The contrast between the Indian of the plain and the destitute Soshoco is very striking; but poor as he is, like the Hottentot, he loves devotedly his native soil.

I shall soon leave Cincinnati for Louisville, in Kentucky, and then for St. Louis; from thence, in order to comply with your request, I shall continue my Indian memoirs. Among other things, I will give you the description of the peace expedition sent by the Crows to the Blackfeet. I collected the facts on the spot, in my mission of 1851; for in the superstitious and religious ideas and practices of the savages, in their expeditions of war and hunting, their character and manners are best described. I will give you these curious details with as much fidelity as I can.

Wars of the Crows and Blackfeet.

Reverend and Dear Father:[10]

In my last I spoke of the Indian hunting in the Great Desert. I will give you to-day some general observations on their wars, and especially what I could learn of an unhappy *peace expedition,* during my last visit to the Crows.

It may be said that war is the *ne plus ultra* of an Indian's glory. The ambition of becoming a great warrior absorbs all his attention, all his talents, all his bravery; it is often the object of all his voluntary sufferings. His prolonged fasts, his long war-paths, penances and macerations, and his religious observances, have principally this sole end. To wear an eagle's plume, the emblem of an Indian warrior, is in his eyes supreme honor, and the most magnificent of ornaments; for it betokens that he has already distinguished himself in battle. Generally at the age of seventeen or eighteen years, after the first fast, and after having selected his wah-kon, manitou, or tutelary spirit, the youthful savage joins the war-parties, which are composed solely of volunteers.

A chief or partisan who wishes to form a war-party, presents himself in the midst of the camp, tomahawk in hand, and painted with vermilion, the symbol of blood. He intones his war-song: this kind of song is short. The war chief proclaims with emphasis his lofty deeds, his patriotic and martial ardor — the sentiments and motives which prompt him to vengeance. His song is accompanied with the drum and the sischiquoin, or gourd filled with little pebbles. He stamps on the ground, as though he could shake the earth to the centre. All the youth listen to him with attention, and any one who rises becomes a volunteer in his party; he, in his turn, intones his war-song, and this ceremony has the force of a solemn pledge, from which a young man cannot honorably withdraw. Each volunteer arms and equips himself with all that will be necessary for him in his expeditions. The whole force of public opinion among the Indians appears to be concentrated on this point. The narration of their adventures and of their valorous deeds, their dances, their religious ceremonies, the speeches of their orators in their public assemblies; whatever, in fine, can serve to inflame ambition in the mind and heart of a barbarian, is referred to the idea of being one day distinguished in war.

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[10] Addressed to the editor of the *Précis Historiques,* Brussels. Dated University of St. Louis, August, 1854.

I have now to speak of the Crows. Among all the tribes of the northwest portion of North America, this nation is considered as the most warlike and valiant. It counts about 480 lodges, ten individuals to a lodge, and roams over the valley of the Yellowstone, principally in the region of the Wind River Mountains, or Black Hills, and the Rocky Mountains. This race is one of the noblest in the desert; they are tall, robust and well formed, have a piercing eye, aquiline nose, and teeth of ivory whiteness. If they are considered as superior in intelligence to all their neighbors, they also surpass them in their wah-kon, or superstitious ideas and ceremonies, which reign in all their movements and actions. In illustration, I will cite the following trait, of which I was innocently and ignorantly the cause.

In 1840, I first met the Crows, in the valley of the Big Horn, a tributary of the Yellowstone. In my quality of Black-gown, they received me with all possible demonstrations of respect and with a sincere joy. I had with me a stock of lucifer matches, which I used from time to time to light my pipe, and the calumet used in the Great Council.

The effect of these matches surprised them greatly; they had never seen any. They conversed about them in all the lodges, and called them the mysterious fire which the Black-gown carried. I was at once considered the greatest medicine man that had ever visited their tribe. They consequently treated me with distinguished respect and listened to all I said with the greatest attention. Before my departure, the chiefs and principal warriors of the council requested me to leave them a portion of my matches. Unconscious of the superstitious ideas which they attached to them, I readily distributed them, reserving only what was necessary for my journey.

In 1842 I visited them again. The reception they gave me was most solemn. I was lodged in the largest and finest lodges of the camp. All the chiefs and warriors were habited in their embroidered moccasins, leggins and buckskin shirts ornamented with beads and porcupine quills, while eagle's feathers crowned their heads, and they conducted me in grand ceremony from lodge to lodge. That I might participate in a grand banquet, I was provided with my band of eaters, who would do honor to the viands and eat for me. One of the great chiefs testified a special friendship for me. "It is to thee, Black-gown," said he to me, "that I owe all my glory in the victories I have gained over my enemies." His language astonished me greatly, and I begged him to explain. Without delay he took from his neck his Wah-kon, or medicine-bag, wrapped in a bit of kid. He unrolled it, and displayed to my wondering view the remnant of the matches I had given him in 1840! "I use them," said he, "every time I go to battle. If the mysterious fire appears at the first rubbing, I dart upon my enemies, sure of obtaining victory." I had considerable difficulty in disabusing their minds of this singular superstition. As you see, it requires little to acquire a reputation among the Indians: with a few lucifer matches, you may be a great man among the Crows, and receive great honors.

The Crows have been invested during several years, on the north by the Blackfeet, on the east by the Assiniboins and Crees, and on the south by the Sioux. Each of these invading nations being more numerous than the nation invaded, the Crows were necessarily engaged in perpetual war, sometimes with one and sometimes with the other of these tribes. Hence the last ten years show a great diminution in their population, which numbers at the present time not more than four hundred warriors.

Occasionally the Crows have enjoyed peace with the tribes of the Blackfeet, Sioux, Bannocks, Assiniboins, etc.; and it is a quite remarkable fact that they have never been the first to violate a treaty of peace except in the following instance, which I will narrate in full.

In 1843, the great chief of the nation was known by the title of "Tezi-Goë," a word which sounds bad enough, meaning Rotten Belly. He was as much renowned for his bravery in war as for his wisdom in council, and the patriotic love that he testified to the whole nation. Seeing with pain the great losses that the continual incursions of so many enemies caused his tribe, he resolved to conclude a solemn treaty of peace, if not with all, at least with a great part of the Blackfeet. He made all suitable arrangements, and convoked his council, to deliberate on the most prompt and the most efficacious means of success in his great design. All the warriors hastened to his aid. After having discussed the different points, it was unanimously decided that a party of twenty-five braves should repair to the Blackfeet camp, to offer them the calumet of peace.

The guide chosen to conduct the band was one of the nation of Blackfeet, taken prisoner by the Crows some years before, and hitherto retained in captivity. In order to attach him more securely to the good cause, the Crows granted him his liberty, with the title of brave, and the permission to wear the eagle's plume. He was, besides, loaded with presents, consisting of horses, arms and ornaments of every kind. Having received his instructions, he set out joyfully and with signs of gratitude, fully resolved to neglect nothing to obtain and consolidate an honorable and lasting peace between the two nations. A place had been designated in which the two tribes might meet as friends and brothers, to celebrate the grand event. The deputation, therefore, set out for the Blackfeet camp of 400 lodges, commanded by the great chief Spotted Deer, or Ponukah-kitzi-Pemmy, which they found encamped in the valley of the Marias river, a pretty large branch of the Missouri river, in the neighborhood of the Great Falls.

About a month before the departure of this expedition, two Crows had been killed, near their own camp, and their scalps carried away, by a war-party of Blackfeet. The two brothers of these unfortunate victims fasted and took their oaths according to custom. These oaths consisted in vowing that they would each kill a Blackfoot, the first good chance. They communicated their intentions to no one. The bravery and determination of these two men were well known. They were elected to join the band of deputies, and promised ostensibly to forget their private wrongs for the public welfare; but in secret they renewed their first intentions, foreseeing that this excursion would probably furnish an occasion of avenging the double murder of their brothers.

The band progressed slowly, using many precautions, and redoubling them as they approached the camp of the Blackfeet. When within a few days' distance from it, they separated in companies of two or three, to scour the country and assure themselves whether any Blackfeet parties were out of the village. In the course of the day the two brothers stayed together, and discovered two Blackfeet Indians returning from the chase, with several horses laden with buffalo meat. Having with them a calumet-handle, they advanced boldly toward their enemies, and offered them the pipe, as on similar occasions. The Blackfeet Indians received the calumet, and were informed that a great deputation, commissioned on the part of the Crows, was repairing to their village, with pacific intentions. They acted with so much address that after some moments the Blackfeet were entirely reassured, and conceived no suspicions nor suffered the least anxiety. One of them presented his gun to one of the two Crows, and the other gave his horse to the second. They took the same way together toward the camp, but their path led through a deep and lonely ravine. There the snare was discovered. The two Blackfeet suddenly received mortal blows, and were thus cowardly assassinated by the two Crows, who scalped their victims. They then killed the horses with arrows, and concealed their carcasses beneath the underwood and briers. The two scalps were carefully secured in their bullet-bags. Having removed all traces of blood from their habiliments, they rejoined their companions, without making known the cruel act of private vengeance they had consummated, secretly and in violation of all received Indian usages. The day which followed this atrocious crime the deputation made a solemn entrance into the camp of the Blackfeet, and were received by the chiefs and braves with the greatest cordiality, and with every attention of Indian hospitality.

The Blackfeet declared themselves favorable to the treaty of peace. They received joyfully the proposition which the Crows made by their guide and interpreter, the recent prisoner. All the politeness and attention of which Indians are capable were lavished upon the deputies. They were invited to a great number of feasts, to amusements and public sports, which lasted late in the night. They were afterward distributed to the lodges of the principal chiefs, in order to repose after their fatiguing journey.

The inclination to steal is very common among the women of several tribes of the northwest. The Blackfeet women share largely in this bad reputation. One of these feminine pilferers, favored by the darkness of night, silently entered the lodges where the Crows were peaceably sleeping. She relieved their pouches of all that could prove valuable to her. While searching, she laid her hand upon a damp, hairy object, and instantly perceived it to be a scalp. She seized it, quitted the camp in the greatest possible silence, and, by the glimmering of the watchfire which was burning in the middle of the camp, examined the bloody trophy. It is very difficult to move an Indian, for he is habituated to strange sights. Such an event would have spread alarm among white men, but it only tended to render the Indians more circumspect and more prudent in taking measures. The woman, after reflecting a moment, turned her steps toward the lodge of the head chief, awoke him, and communicated to his ear in the softest whisper the important discovery she had made. He lighted a pine torch, in order to examine the scalp. At the first glance he recognized it as that of a young hunter who had not yet come back from the chase. The chief instantly formed his plan. He made signs to the woman to follow him, recommended her to retire to her own lodge, because nothing could be done before daylight, and forbade her to divulge her secret or to excite the slightest suspicion. He feared that in the confusion which would probably arise, and sheltered by the darkness, some of the Crows might escape.

Spotted Deer then, alone and noiselessly, made the rounds of his camp. He aroused his bravest warriors, to the number of twenty or thirty, by a single touch, and also those whom he desired to consult in this circumstance. They followed him, asking no questions, and were conducted to a solitary place in the vicinity of the camp. There, forming a circle and lighting a torch, the chief displayed the scalp, and related to them the adventure of the woman.

The youngest of his counselors desired instant revenge on the Crows, but the prudent chief represented to them that the night was not a favorable time; besides, that having smoked together the calumet of peace, to kill them in their own lodges, and in the very camp of the Blackfeet, would be at variance with all their customs and practices, and would draw upon them the contempt of all other Indian nations. He, however, commanded them to hold themselves armed and ready at daybreak.

The Crows rose early. They were somewhat surprised to see the lodges they occupied surrounded by a band of four or five hundred warriors, armed and mounted on their fleetest coursers, and with countenances far from friendly, as on the previous eve. But Indians are not easily disconcerted; they awaited the result in silence. As soon as daylight appeared in the camp, Spotted Deer convened a grand council and summoned the Crow deputies to appear. They at once obeyed, and took their places with the air of haughty indifference, peculiar to the Indian, in the centre of a circle of enemies who were burning with vengeance. When all were in order Spotted Deer arose, and thus addressed the Crows: "Strangers, only yesterday you arrived in our camp. You declared yourselves the deputies of your principal chiefs, sent to conclude with us, hitherto your foes, a solid and durable treaty of peace. We listened to your message. Your words and propositions seemed reasonable and advantageous. All our lodges have been open to you; you have shared in our feasts and hospitality; you joined in our games. Yesterday we had the intention of showing you today still greater liberality. But, before discoursing further, I have one single question to ask you. Crows! I must have an answer; and that answer will decide whether peace be possible, or whether a war of destruction must continue." Then drawing the scalp from the bullet-pouch, and displaying it before them, he cried: "Tell me, Crows, whose hair is this? Who among you claims this trophy?" Those of the Crows who were ignorant of the affair, looked on with amazement, and could only imagine that the Blackfeet sought a pretext for quarreling. No one replied. The chief resumed: "Will no one answer? Must I call a woman to question these Crow braves?" Then beckoning to the stealer of the scalp, he said to her, "Show us to which warrior this trophy belongs." Without hesitation, she pointed to one of the brothers. Every eye was fixed upon him. The chief, Spotted Deer, approaching the murderer, said to him, "Knowest thou this scalp? Didst thou take it? Fearest thou now to avow it?" With one bound the young Crow placed himself opposite the chief, and shouted: "Spotted Deer, I fear not! It is I who took the scalp! If I endeavored to conceal it, I did so with the desire of doing more evil! Thou askest whose hair is this. Look at the hairy fringe of thy shirt and thy leggins. In my turn, I ask, whose hair is that? Belongs it not to my two brothers, slain by thee or thine, hardly two moons ago? or belongs it not to the relations of some Crow here present? 'Tis vengeance brings me here! My brother holds in his shotbag the companion of this scalp. We determined, before leaving the camp, to cast into thy face these bloody tufts, at the same moment, as our challenge of defiance."

This language determined the Blackfeet. "Young man, thou hast spoken well," replied Spotted Deer; "thou art valiant and fearest not death, which will strike thee and thy companions in a few moments. Yet we have smoked the calumet together. It is not suitable that the ground on which that ceremony took place should drink thy blood. See, Crows, the hill before you! It is in the way that leads to your lodges. So far we allow you to go. When you get there, we will pursue you. Go on, and leave us."

The Crows instantly left the place, and advanced toward the hill designated by the Blackfoot chief, determined to sell their lives dearly in this unequal combat. Their enemies mounted their horses, and awaited with ardor the order for the pursuit.

As soon as the Crows reached the hill, the terrific war-whoop — the *Sassaskwi* — resounded through the camp. The Blackfeet, burning to avenge the outrage received, rushed forward with the greatest impetuosity. The Crows, after running some moments, found a deep ravine excavated in the plain by the running waters: judging the position favorable, they took refuge in it, and maintained themselves for some time. As soon as, in their first ardor, the Blackfeet approached the ravine to dislodge them, a general discharge of muskets and arrows from the Crows killed eight Blackfeet, and wounded a great number. This discharge routed them, and forced them to draw off. The Blackfeet dismounted, and on foot there were several skirmishes between the two bands; but all were disadvantageous to the Blackfeet, for the Crows were protected in the hole, and only showed their heads through necessity, while their enemies fought in the open plain. A great number of Blackfeet lost their lives in these different attempts, while the Crows lost not a man. Spotted Deer, seeing the danger and the useless destruction of so many warriors, made an appeal to his braves. He proposed to them to place himself at their head, and to fall simultaneously on their enemies. His proposition was accepted; the warwhoop resounded anew through the bloody plain; they attacked the Crows *en masse*, and after having discharged on them their guns and arrows, armed only with their daggers and tomahawks, they darted with confused violence into the ravine, and in a few moments horribly massacred the whole band. In this last attack it is worth noting that not a single Blackfoot lost his life.

The combat ended, the scalps were carried off by the warriors who had most distinguished themselves in the affair. The women cut the corpses of their slain in such small pieces, that it would be difficult to detect among them the smallest trace of the human form. The scalps, with all the torn scraps of flesh, were then attached as trophies to the extremities of poles and lances, and triumphantly borne through the camp, mid chants of victory, yells of rage, with howling and vociferations against their enemies. There was also a general mourning, caused by the loss of so many warriors fallen in this horrible engagement. Since that day, war continues without relaxation to the present time.

This shocking recital I learned in 1851, on that very battle-field, and from a chief who was in the engagement.

I request you, in a special manner, to pray very particularly for these poor Indians. During fourteen years they have implored the favor of having some of our Fathers sent to them. The scripture, " They asked bread, and there was none to break it to them," may be justly quoted in regard to them. In my short visits to them I have been touched with their affability, their beneficent hospitality and the respectful attention they gave to my instructions. I augur very favorably of their good dispositions, and am convinced that two or three fervent and zealous missionaries could gather consoling fruits for religion from these barbarians, who sigh to know and practice the gospel of peace. Since my last interview with them in 1851 I have received several letters from them.

Do not forget me in your prayers and be so good as to remember me to the Fathers and brothers of St. Michael's College.

Fire-worship.

St. Louis, Nov. 14, 1857.

Reverend and Very Dear Father:[11]

The ancient worship of fire exists among our Indians from time immemorial. It is found in their traditions, as in the history of almost all the nations which have had temples and altars in which was a pyre, a hearth, a brasier, in order to entertain continually the fire used in their sacrifices. The Greeks adored fire under the name of Haitos, and the Latins under the name of Vesta. Father Charlevoix represents the tribes of Louisiana, and especially the ancient tribe of the Natchez, as keeping up a perpetual fire in all their medicine lodges or temples. Among the Moquis of New Mexico the sacred fire is constantly maintained by aged men. They believe that great misfortunes will afflict the whole tribe should the fire be extinguished.

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[11] Letter XLIV, Second Series, *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres;* Letter XVII, Second Series, *Western Missions and Missionaries.* The latter text is here followed.

The superstitious devotion to fire was general among the Mexicans at the period of the Conquest. In a book entitled, *Inie Calotle in Ilhuicac,* or *Way to Heaven,* printed in 1607 and 1612, we see that each one of the eighteen months of the Mexican year was consecrated to a particular divinity, honored by festivals more or less solemn, and almost always by human sacrifices.

The first month, which begun on the second of February, was consecrated to *Altachuala,* god of the *detention of waters;* the second, to *the destroying god of nations;* the third, to the *god of the waters;* the fourth, to the *god of maize;* the fifth, falling about Easter, to the god *Tescatlipoca,* which was the Jupiter of the Romans; the ninth was consecrated to the *god of war.*

The tenth month, called *Xocolh-huetzi,* began on the 4th of August. Then took place the great feast of the god of fire, or *Xuchten-hetli,* with numerous human sacrifices. They thrust living men into the flames. When these were half-burnt, but still alive, they tore out the heart, in presence of the image of the god. Then they planted in the middle of the court of the temple a lofty tree, round which they performed a thousand ceremonies and sacrifices worthy of the founder of this feast. It lasted longer than the others.

In the eleventh month falls the festival of *Toci,* mother of the gods; on the twelfth, that of the *Coming of the gods;* on the thirteenth, the *Feasts upon the mountains;* the fifteenth month was reserved to the god of war, and the seventeenth to the god of the rains.

The 12th of January commenced, with the eighteenth month, called *Itzcali,* another feast of fire. Two days previous (the 10th), in the middle of the night, they kindled the *new fire* before the idol of the god, elegantly ornamented. With this fire they lighted a grand pile. The hunters brought all that they had killed or fished from the waters, and presented it to the priest, who cast it into the furnace. Then all the assistants were obliged to eat very hot the *tamalillos,* that is to say, little loaves of corn-meal containing a small portion of roasted meat. What was most singular in this festival, is that, three successive years, no human victim was immolated, and the fourth year, the number of victims surpassed that of other feasts. The king in person and the lords presented themselves in the midst of this heap of corpses to dance, and all sung, with respect and solemnity, the *reserved chant,* which they call in their language, *Neteuhicuicaliztli.*

In a *Treatise on the Idolatry and Superstitions of the Mexicans,* a manuscript of 1629, we perceive that what particularly attracted the veneration of the Mexicans was fire. For this reason this element presided at the birth, and at almost all the actions of life among these victims of error. The infant was born in this superstition. At the moment of its birth, fire was kindled in the room of the mother, and it was maintained four consecutive days, without removing any of it. They believed that if the live coals were drawn out, a cloud would suddenly appear over the eye of the newly born. On the fourth day the elders took the child and the fire out of the chamber; then they passed the fire four times round the child's head, twice in one direction and twice in its opposite. Then the new-born infant received its name, which was in general that of the animal or of the element to which its birthday was consecrated — as the alligator, the serpent, the tiger, the eagle, etc.; or the water, the fire, the house, etc.

In the different sacrifices, tapers and incense almost always had a share.

We also find among them a mythological recital, which shows that a personage, formerly covered with leprosy, obtained the empire of the future world, for having passed by the ordeal of fire, and was transformed into the sun, to the great disappointment of other great personages who shrank from the test. Is this the cause of their respect for fire, and the reason why they attribute to it a mysterious power? The Potawatomies say that Chipiapoos, or the *Dead-man,* is the grand manitou that presides in the country of souls and there maintains the sacred fire, for the happiness of all those of his race who arrive there. I have spoken of it in my *Oregon Missions*, p. 350.[12]

Fire is, in all the Indian tribes that I have known, an emblem of happiness or of good fortune. It is kindled before all their deliberations. "Having extinguished the enemy's fire," signifies with them to have gained the victory. They attribute to fire a sacred character, which is remarkable everywhere in their usages and customs, especially in their religious ceremonies. They generally maintain mysterious ideas concerning the substance and phenomena of fire, which they consider supernatural. To see a fire rising mysteriously, in their dreams or otherwise, is the symbol of the passage of a soul into the other world. Before consulting the manitous, or tutelary spirits, or before addressing the dead, they begin by kindling the sacred fire. This fire must be struck from a flint, or reach them mysteriously by lightning, or in some other way. To light the sacred fire with common fire, would be considered among them as a grave and dangerous transgression.

The Chippewas of the North kindle a fire on every new tomb, during four successive nights. They say that this symbolical and sacred light illumines their solitary and obscure passage to the country of souls. The following is the origin of this sacred and funereal fire among this people. I received the legend from the mouth of our worthy Watomika.

A little war-party of Chippewas met some enemies in a large and beautiful plain. The war-whoop was instantly shouted, and the contest commenced. Their chief was a valiant and distinguished warrior. On this occasion he surpassed himself in bravery, and a great number of his enemies fell beneath the redoubled blows of his tomahawk. He was giving the signal and the cry of victory to his braves in arms, when he received an arrow in his breast and fell lifeless on the plain. The warrior who receives his last blow in the act of combating is never buried. According to the ancient custom, he remains seated on the battlefield, his back resting against a tree, and his face turned in the direction which indicates the flight of his enemies. It was the case with this chief. His grand crest of eagle feathers was properly adjusted on his head — each plume denoted a trophy or a scalp won in combat. His face was carefully painted. They clothed him and adorned him with his most beautiful habiliments, as though he were yet alive. All his equipment was placed at his side, his bow and quiver of arrows, of which he had made such noble usage in war, reposing on his shoulder. The "post of the brave" was planted before him in solemn ceremony. He received all the honors due to an heroic and illustrious warrior. The rites, the chants, the funereal speeches, all, all were celebrated according to the custom of his nation in similar circumstances. His companions at length offered him their last farewells. No one had the slightest doubt of his death — of the glorious death of their great chief. Were they deceived? The sequel of the legend will show.

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[12] Longfellow has embodied this legend of Chipiapoos in his poem, "Hiawatha," but ascribes it to a plagiarist, who copied Father De Smet's narrative without the least credit.—*Editor* [of 1859 Ed. De Smet's Potawatomi letter was written January, 1847; Schoolcraft's five-volume work, 1853-56; Hiawatha, 1854-55].

Although deprived of speech and of all other means of giving signs of life, the chief heard distinctly all the words of the songs and of the discourses, the cries, the lamentations, and the bravadoes of his warriors. He witnessed their gestures, their dances, and all their ceremonies around the "post of honor." His icy hand was sensible to the pressure of the friendly grasp; his lips, though pale and livid, felt the ardor and heat of the farewell embrace and salute, without his being able to return it. Perceiving himself thus forsaken, his anguish became excessive, as also his desire to accompany his companions in their return to the village. When he saw them disappear one after the other, his spirit agitated him in such a manner, that he made a violent movement — he arose, or rather *seemed* to rise, and followed them. His form was invisible to them. This was for him a new cause of surprise and contradiction, which swelled at once his grief and his despair. However, he determined to follow them closely. Wheresoever they went, he went also. When they marched, he marched; whether riding or on foot, he was in their midst. He camped with them; he slept by their side; he awoke with them. In short, he shared in all their fatigues, in all their troubles, in all their labors. While he enjoyed the pleasure of their conversation, while he was present at their repasts, no drink was presented to allay his thirst, no dishes to appease his hunger. His questions and his responses equally remained without response. "Warriors! my braves!" cried he, with bitterness and anguish; "do you not hear the voice of your chief? Look! Do you not see my form? You remain motionless — you seem not to see and hear me. Stanch the blood which is flowing from the deep wound I have received. Suffer me not to die deprived of aid, to famish amid abundance. O you braves! whom I led often into the thickest of the fight, who have always been obedient to my voice, already you seem to forget me! One drop of water to quench my feverish thirst — one mouthful of sustenance! In my distress, how dare you refuse me!"

At each halt, he addressed them in alternate supplication and reproach, but in vain. No one understood his words. If they heard his voice, it was rather for them as the passage or the whispered murmurs of the wind of summer through the foliage and branches of the forest, unnoticed and unheeded.

In fine, after a long and painful journey, the war-party arrived on the summit of a lofty eminence, which overlooked the whole village. The warriors prepared to make their solemn entrance. They decorated themselves with their handsomest ornaments, carefully painted their faces, attached to themselves their victorious trophies, especially scalps, which they fastened on the ends of their bows, tomahawks and lances. Then burst forth a unanimous shout, the cry of joy and of victory of the Chippewas, the "Kumaudjeewug! Kumaudjeewug! Kumaudjeewug!" — that is to say, they have met; or, they have fought; or, they have conquered. This enthusiastic shout resounded throughout the whole camp. According to custom, the women and children went forth to meet the warriors, in order to honor their return and proclaim their praises. Those who had lost some members of their family approached with anxiety and eagerness, to find out whether they were really dead, and to assure themselves that they died valiantly, in battling with the enemy. The old man, bowed by the weight of years, consoles himself for the loss of a son, if he sank like a brave man, arms in hand; and the grief of the youthful widow loses all its bitterness when she hears the praises bestowed on the manes of her valiant spouse. The stirring recitals of the combat awaken a martial fire in the hearts of all the youth; and children, yet incapable of understanding the cause of the grand festival, mingle their infantine shouts of joy and gladness with the boisterous and reiterated acclamations of the whole tribe.

Amid all this clamor and all these rejoicings, no one was conscious of the presence of the great war chief. He heard the information that his near relations and his friends received concerning his fortunes. He listened to the recital of his bravery, of his lofty deeds, of his glorious death in the midst of his vanquished enemies. He heard them speak of the post of the brave, planted in his honor on the field of battle. "Here I am!" cried he; "I see! I walk! Look at me! Touch me! I am not dead! Tomahawk in hand, I shall renew my march against the enemy, at the head of my braves; and soon, in the banquet, you will hear the tones of my drum!" No one heard him; no one perceived him. The voice of the great chief was no more to them than the perpetual din of the falling waters from cascade to cascade at the foot of their village. Impatient, he took the direction of his lodge. There he found his wife in deep despair, cutting, in token of mourning, her long and floating locks, lamenting her misfortune, the loss of a cherished husband, and the desolate state of her orphan children. He strove to undeceive her, and to comfort her with words of tenderness; he sought to clasp his infants in his arms; but here again, vain and futile were his efforts; they remained insensible to his voice and his paternal caresses. The mother, bathed in tears, sat inclining her head between her hands. The chief, suffering and dejected, besought her to dress his deep wound, to apply to it the herbs and roots contained in his medicine sack; but she moved not; she answered only with tears and groans. Then he approached his mouth close to the ear of his wife, and shouted aloud, "I am thirsty! I am hungry! Give me food and drink!" The woman thought she heard a rumbling in her ear, and spoke of it to her companions. The chief, in his vexation, struck her a severe blow on the brow. She quietly pressed her hand to the stricken place, and said, "I feel a slight headache."

Frustrated at every step, and in all his attempts to make himself known, the great chief began to reflect on what he had heard, in his youth, from the distinguished jugglers. He had learned that sometimes the spirit or soul quits the body and wanders up and down at hazard, according to its own will and pleasure. He therefore thought that perchance his body was lying on the field of battle, and that his spirit only had accompanied the warriors on their return to the village. He instantly resolved to return by the path he had pursued, at a distance of four days' march. The three first days he met no one. In the afternoon of the fourth, when approaching the battle-field, he remarked a fire in the centre of the path which he was following. Wishing to avoid it, he quitted the track; but the fire, at the same instant, changed position, and placed itself before him. In vain he tried to go from right to left, the same mysterious fire ever preceded him, as if to bar his entrance to the field of battle. "I also," said he to himself, "I am a spirit; I am seeking to return into my body; I will accomplish my design. Thou wilt purify me, but thou shalt not hinder the realization of my project. I have always conquered my enemies, notwithstanding the greatest obstacles. This day I will triumph over thee, Spirit of Fire!" he said, and, with an intense effort, he darted through the mysterious flame.

He came forth from a long trance. He found himself seated on the battle-ground, his back supported against the tree. His bow, his arrows, his clothes, his ornaments, his war accoutrements, the post of the brave, all were in the same state and occupied the same position in which his soldiers had left them on the day of strife. He raised his eyes and perceived a large eagle, perched on the highest branch of a tree above his head. Instantly he recognized his manitou bird, the same that had appeared to him in his earlier days, when he came forth from the state of childhood; the bird that he had selected for his tutelary spirit, and of which he had always worn a talon suspended from his neck. His manitou had carefully guarded his body, and had prevented the vultures and other birds of prey from devouring it. The chief arose, stood some minutes, but found himself weak and reduced. The blood from his wound had ceased to flow, and he dressed it. He was acquainted with the efficacy of certain leaves and roots suitable for healing bruises. He sought them, gathered them with care in the forest, and crushing some between two stones, applied them. He chewed and swallowed others.

After the lapse of a few days, he felt sufficient strength to attempt to return to his village; but hunger consumed him. In the absence of large animals, he lived on little birds that his arrows brought down, insects and reptiles, roots and berries. After many hardships, he arrived at length on the shore of a river that separated him from wife, children and friends. The chief uttered the shout agreed upon in such circumstances, the shout of the happy return of an absent friend. The signal was heard. A canoe was immediately sent for him. During the absence of the canoe, the conjectures were numerous concerning the absent person, whose friendly voice of approach had just been heard. All those who had belonged to the war-party were present in the camp. The dead alone remained on the field of battle. "Might not the unknown on the other shore be an absent hunter? Or might not this shout prove a bold ruse of an enemy to take the scalps of the rowers?" To send a canoe was therefore judged imprudent, because they were not sure of the absence of an individual from the village.

While on the opposite shore all these conjectures were increasing, the war-chief embarks. He soon presents himself before them, amid the acclamations and joyful shouts of all his relatives and friends. The Indians eagerly pour forth from every lodge to shake hands and celebrate the happy return of their chief and faithful conductor. That day will be for them ever memorable and solemn. They return thanks to the Master of Life, and to all the manitous of the Indian calendar, for the preservation and return of their beloved chief. The whole day is consumed in dances, songs and banquets.

When the first burst of astonishment and universal joy had a little subsided, and the usual tranquillity was restored to the village, the chief beat his drum in order to convene his people. He related to them the whole story of his extraordinary adventures, and terminated his recital by making known to them, and imposing on them, "the worship of the sacred and funereal fire" — that is to say, the ceremony which consists in maintaining, during four consecutive nights, a fire on every newly-closed sepulchre. He told them that this devotion is advantageous and agreeable to the soul of the deceased; that the distance to the country of souls is four long days; that in this journey the soul needs a fire every night in its encampment; that this funereal fire, kindled on the tomb by the near relations of the departed, serves to enlighten and warm the soul during its peregrination. The Chippewas believe that when this religious rite is neglected, the soul or spirit is forced to discharge the difficult task of making and maintaining a fire itself, and that with the greatest inconvenience.

Here I am, dear Father, at the close of the legend of the Chippewas. I give it as I received it. I am assured that it is very ancient. The worship of fire among our Indians springs from the worship of the primitive pagans, who, in order to purify themselves, leaped over fire, either a mysterious one, or lighted in honor of some divinity. The laws of Moses prohibited this practice among the Jews.

Yet one word more, Reverend Father, and I finish this lengthy epistle. If you will read over one of my former letters, you will there find that in my visit to the Crows, camped at the base of the Rocky Mountains, I was the object of an extreme veneration among these savages. Why? I was considered as the bearer or the guardian of the "mysterious fire." In effect, I carried a box of phosphoric matches in the pocket of my *soutane*. The savages perceived that I used them to light my pipe or their calumet. In a second visit I learned the cause, very futile in itself, which had attached such great importance to my poor person.

I receive from time to time news from these poor and unfortunate pagans. They do not forget the visits which they have received, and I certainly never forget these dear children of my heart. They continue to beg, earnestly, every year, that missionaries be sent them to baptize their children and instruct them in the holy faith, which can alone render them happy here and hereafter.

You asked me one day, Reverend Father, in an excursion which we made together during my last visit in Belgium, "What is the degree of civilization of the tribes that you have visited?" I replied to you: "I do not know all that Europeans wish us to comprehend by the word *civilisation*. These savages are spoken of as exceptional beings, possessing another nature. They are men like ourselves. They only differ from us because they are ignorant, poor, and unfortunate. But their hearts are so good! There are some who have much natural ability, and what is more valuable, a great deal of faith and virtue!" Is not the close of my letter a confirmation of what I said to you? What gratitude! What desire to know God! If, therefore, there is question of civilization of souls for heaven, oh! we have no need of European civilizers. Cause prayers to be offered that God may send us missionaries, and we will make them happy!

I commend all these dear savages, our brethren in Jesus Christ, redeemed by the same blood, and inclosed in the same Sacred Heart — I commend them all most earnestly to your holy sacrifices, and to your kind prayers.

Deign to believe me, with the most profound respect, Reverend Father,

Ræ. Væ. servus in Christo,
P. J. De SMET, S. J.

Great Medicine Dance among the Senecas.[13]

(As related to me by the Chief of the Six Nations.)

When one is sick among the Senecas, or when an epidemic rages in their camp or village, in ordinary times, the medicine band or jugglers are applied to by the family of the sick patient, or by the village. They implore their assistance, from the relief of the evil spirits who have taken possession, or entered the body or bodies of their relatives. In the first case, should the family be rich in horses, and have plenty of other worldly goods, it pays abundantly for the operation. In an epidemic or general calamity, the performance is always *gratis*.

The chief of the medicine band calls on his devotees and they assemble either in a lodge or cabin, from which every ray of light is excluded. All enter the dark abode, dressed in their most fantastic apparel, their faces all covered with the most hideous painted masks, roughly carved out of light wood. Each carries his medicine bag. Their gestures and movements are all unnatural, they hop and dance, they cut all sorts of shines and whimsical pranks, turning their heads right and left as they move along and enter the dark hall. A table is placed in the middle. On it each attendant deposits his medicine bag. Utter silence is observed by all. An occasional groan, or rather grunt, is heard now and then. All squat down on the naked floor, until the first sign for operation be given. The hovering of the eagle, high and distant above the hall, is heard at last, breaking in upon the deep silence that reigned within. The flapping of the eagle's wings and its shrill notes become more and more distinct, as the great medicine bird lowers and finally, with a loud piercing sound, announces its presence in their midst.[14] The chief, or Great Medicine Man, then arises and opens the feast, in which nothing else is used than the boiled heads of deer, already cooked for the great occasion. He seizes one head, with both hands, gives the sound of the ravenous crow, pouncing upon its prey, and he devours his portion. The deer heads, in succession, are passed around the circle, each member repeating the cry of the pouncing crow, until all the meat has been consumed and the bones left bare. Then the dancing, the beating of drums, and the sound of the Indian flute, accompanied with unearthly sounds and stamping of feet, all keeping time with the music — thus the night passes in revels. When twilight begins to appear, the curtains are all withdrawn. The stage or cabin is then wide opened. Each juggler takes up his medicine bag, in which he finds a new supply of medicines, all carefully and mysteriously arranged by an invisible spirit.[15] Each carries in his hand the empty skin of a snapping turtle, holding it by the neck, the chief badge of the medicine confraternity. The turtle contains some small water-worn pebbles, which they rattle as they come out, exhibiting the same gestures and movements as on entering the medicine hall on the preceding evening.

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[13] From the Linton Album.

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[14] The flapping of the eagle's wings and its screechings are performed by an amateur of the musical band, who draws the various eagle sounds from his flute.—*Author's Note.*

Then they proceed to the sick man's lodge or cabin, hopping and dancing around the dwelling, shaking their snapping turtle shells, and making hideous and unnatural sounds through the nostrils, in imitation of the owl — all this to frighten off the evil spirit and drive it out of the body of the patient. After having made several rounds, the chief medicine man throws open the entrance, falls his full length on the floor and drags himself along, in all sorts of antics, keeping up meanwhile his rattling and his guttural sounds and cries. He goes under the bed, removes every object, searches and passes in every nook and crook, tumbles in the fire and handles the glowing coals,[16] which he scatters around the sickroom. After this long performance and operation, they all join in a common dance, accompanied by the sharp rattling turtles and the guttural gibbering songs, and the scene closes, the evil spirit is put to flight and they receive their pay. Should the patient recover, the Indian medicine men have wrought a great new wonder, and they receive all the credit for the cure. On the contrary, if the sick man dies, to another more powerful spirit the death of the patient is cunningly attributed.

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[15] The renewal of the mysterious medicine bags is made by one of the confraternity under the dark veil of the night.—*Author's Note.*

[16] The handling of the red-hot coals is attributed to the hands and other exposed parts of the body being besmeared with the sap of a certain weed, which protects against burns and renders them insensible to heat.—*Author's Note.*

Grass Dance among the Yanktons.[17]

When one enters an Indian camp, whatever be the size of it, 100 to 200 lodges or 800 to 1,000 souls, one is struck by the order and tranquillity that prevail. Among them as everywhere else the children are playing with all their might at their little innocent games, their bows and arrows or balls, or running races. The women are about their usual housework which is various and ample enough. They do the cooking, cut the wood and go for water. They work the skins of the animals killed in the chase — that is, they remove the hair from the hide, dry it, scrape it, tan it and paint it; they soften the skins to be used for garments, which they afterward embroider with porcupine quills or beads of various colors. Besides all this, they have the entire care of their little papooses or children; they are always and everywhere industriously occupied. The men look after the horses, make bows and arrows, prepare and dry their smoking herb (kinikinik) or busy themselves about useful or purely fanciful matters. Their favorite occupation is to smoke the calumet in peace, eat a good piece of broiled buffalo or deer and then take a nap or else chat over the news of the day and the future movements of the camp. Though less perhaps than civilized countries, still the Indian camps also have their idlers and loafers, their good-for-nothings who kill time before the mirror, daubing their faces with colors and adorning themselves from head to foot.

On the other hand, upon the arrival of a person whom they desire to honor, everything is life and movement in the camp; everybody is on foot to celebrate their guest's visit. He passes through a long series of handshakes and later he is honored with a serenade accompanied with a dance. The dances are extremely varied and animated, and if the visitor stays long enough, they give him the whole series. On each occasion a large circle of dancers is formed, all hideously painted. The musicians begin to beat their drums and tambourines and all accompany the music with a measured chant varied with piercing yells, grunts and roars to accentuate the rhythm. When the women's voices are added, the vocal part of the performance is soft, plaintive and melodious. The dance is often a combination of different dances. Here is a list of the principal ones: the Chief's dance, the Beggar's dance, the Buffalo and Corn dances, the dance of the Dead, the Marriage dance, and the dance of Return from War, accompanied with prisoners and sacrifices. The war dance is everywhere the most important and most varied; it is the faithful image of an Indian battle-field. It represents the departure of the warriors, their arrival in the enemy's country, the attack, the scalping, their triumphal return to the tribe and the torture of the prisoners. They put a lively enthusiasm into these dances; their ardor and activity form a striking contrast to the stoical repose of their ordinary way of life.

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[17] Letter to Father Terwecoren, dated November, 1867. Translated from the French.

After this explanatory preface, I propose to give you the details of the Grass dance instituted by the good chief Pananniapapi before his conversion to the faith. He is the head chief of the Yankton tribe, which consists of nearly 3,000 souls and belongs to the Sioux nation.

Among the Indians each tribe has its societies or associations. The principal one among the Yanktons is called the Grass band or *Pejimakinnanka*. All the braves, or men of heart, as the Indians express it, belong to this fraternity. All the members enter into a solemn engagement: first, to avoid quarrels among themselves and to submit any differences which may arise to the arbitration of two or three wise men. That is their supreme court, improvised for the occasion, and there is no appeal from its decision: the result is generally happy and they live in good understanding and great harmony: second, the society undertakes to give aid and assistance to the weak, to protect the widow and orphan and to succor the sick and the stranger in need.

At the ceremonial dances each member carries a long bunch of grass, which is among them the emblem of abundance and charity. It is the grass that nourishes their horses and domestic animals, and fattens the buffalo, the deer, the elk, the bighorn and the antelope of the plains and mountains. Their horses carry all their belongings in their periodical migrations and they ride them on their travels and to the chase. The flesh of the wild animals nourishes them and their skins serve them for winter and summer garments, for bed and blankets. The skin of the buffalo especially serves in the construction of their canoes and skiffs and their comfortable lodges and tents, and furnishes them cords and everything necessary for the making of their saddles and bridles. The Grass band willingly shares the fruits of the chase with the orphan, the widow, the old man and the stranger.

It is especially in the spring, when the grass is tender and sweet, that their ceremonial dances take place. The badge or distinctive mark of the society is the bunch of grass braided and attached to the waist of each member in the form and appearance of a long tail.

At the first signal given by the master of ceremonies all the brethren are on foot carefully painted and in their finest costumes. They form a large circle, brandish their weapons, whether guns, lances, war-clubs, bows and arrows or any other arms which have been the instrument of some heroic act either in war or in the chase. All their movements are in strict time to the sound of the drum, tambourine, flute and gourd filled with pebbles. While they leap and dance with fantastic gestures and capers, each brother in his turn sings his *Dowampi* or song, recounting his lofty deeds of valor or his heroic charities. The choruses in which all join are full of sarcasm of cowardice and avarice. Each dancer seems to have a pirouette and to take a position all his own. They jump up and down and the ground seems to tremble beneath the beating of their feet. They wind in and out and turn in every direction, right and left, in an admirable confusion, keeping time with the deafening sound of the wild music.

The dance is always followed by a feast. The guests usually being numerous, it takes place in the open on the place of their meeting. A circle is formed about the boiling kettles and the roasting meat, which are more or less numerous according to the number invited. Every guest carries his plate or dish. The master of ceremonies chosen for the occasion is he who has received the most dangerous wounds in war. Eg-gha-kata-matscha, or Mean Deer, is today the head of the society. He received a bullet in a fight with his enemies, which passed through his right arm and all his chest; still he recovered. In the dance it is he who rises first and sets the pace. After the dance it is he again who first touches the boiling kettles and the roasting meats. Each number of the band helps himself after him and the invited guests follow. Every one eats and does honor to his piece and drinks his soup and coffee amid the most joyous and animated conversation.

Permit me to add the remark that the dances of the Indians (except the Scalp dance, which really makes one shudder) are generally modest and innocent. The sexes are never mingled. The men dance by themselves and the women form a ring around them. These savage dances certainly exceed in propriety many dances in civilized countries.

CHAPTER VII.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

Primitive superstitions — The theory of Wakan or medicine — The creation legend — Sacrifice to avert evil — Dread of the unknown — Charms and amulets — The Creator approached through his works — Murder, and vengeance — Robbery not wrong in itself — Ideas of a future state.

St. Louis University, Sept., 1866.

Reverend Dear Father:

THIS is a copy of a letter sent to Reverend Father Weld, at his own request, for his *Home Journal,* should it meet with his approbation. I made a promise to Reverend Father Terwecoren to send him the same little production for his *Précis Historiques,* in which most of my letters have appeared. It was written during my leisure hours on the steamer *Ontario,* during my late long mission and trip to the Rocky Mountains. I take the liberty of sending it to your Reverence such as it was originally written. I will acknowledge to you that I have somewhat an interested motive in doing so, however; our old acquaintance and friendship gives me some little title, together with your thorough knowledge of the English and French languages. Should you find time to glance over it and should you think it worthy of being published, it would afford me great honor and pleasure, if your Reverence were willing to undertake its translation.

I have chosen for my subject the moral code and religious ideas of the western Indian nations who inhabit the upper plains watered by the Missouri river and its numerous tributaries. I am well aware that the task is rather a difficult one. I have made careful researches on the subject and have sought and obtained valuable information from intelligent traders who have resided a number of years among the various Indian tribes of the West and have become familiar with their manners and customs. I mention with gratitude and pleasure the names of my principal informers and kind friends, Messrs. [E. T.] Denig, [Robert] Meldrum and [Alexander] Culbertson.

Moral teachers have always thought it worth their while to examine into and thoroughly understand the people whom they are called upon to instruct and to analyze their religion, superstitions, or moral code, if any, with a view to combat error effectively and to implant truth. There are no people amongst whom the Christian religion has yet been attempted more various and obstinate in their superstitions than the northwestern tribes of roving Indians, and notwithstanding much has been advanced by different writers and residents among them, we see but little that would serve to show a teacher in what their errors really consist, or how they may be successfully refuted. Most stories of travel among the Indians only exhibit some of their manners and customs at large without pointing out or revealing their motives of actions. Indeed, nothing but a long and continued intimacy with their camp and language, the lot of very few, would enable them to do so.

By most persons the capacity of the Indians has been greatly underrated. They are generally considered as low in intellect, wild men thirsting after blood, hunting for game or plunder, debased in their habits and groveling in their ideas. Quite the contrary is the case. They show order in their national government, order and dignity in the management of their domestic affairs, zeal in what they believe to be their religious duties, sagacity and shrewdness in their dealings and often a display of reasoning powers far above the medium of uneducated white men or Europeans. Their religion, as a system, is far superior to that of the inhabitants of Hindostan or Japan; therefore to overcome this and establish the truths of Christianity, both their reason and feelings must be wrought upon by teachers pursuing such a course of life and occupation as will convince them of the sincerity of their beliefs and endeavors. The grace of God operates meanwhile in their untutored minds and hearts to bring them to the knowledge of the true and holy faith, which he alone can give; as it is written in the holy scriptures: "Faith is a gift of God."

It is therefore advisable to know what is the true nature of their religion when closely analyzed; what are their ideas of the Creator, worship, of futurity; what in their opinion constitutes crime. Are crimes offenses to the Great Spirit or to the individual? Have they, or are they under, any moral obligation to serve the Great Spirit? Are good deeds rewarded and bad ones punished in this life or in a future state? Do they believe in a future at all? How does this belief affect their course of action in this life? Are they in reality idolaters? and if so, in what and of what do their idols consist? These and other points bearing upon their moral conditions are what I propose to explain, though not perhaps in the order in which they stand.

All these Indians believe in the existence of a Great Spirit, the Creator of all things, and this appears to be an inherent, original and inborn idea. They do not, however, embody it; it is a spirit. The name of this spirit is Wakan Tankah or Great Medicine. The word "medicine" in this case has no reference to the use of drugs, but means all that is incomprehensible, supernatural, all-powerful; everything that cannot be explained by ordinary means, or that is above their comprehension.

Their own priests or conjurers are likewise termed Wakan. A steamboat, a watch, any machinery, even toys of whose principle of motion they are ignorant, would be called Wakan—medicine. Now this great medicine, Wakan Tankah, refers to something greater than the power of man; consequently the acts of the Great Spirit are manifested in the elements, natural phenomena, sickness and death, famine and distress, loss occasioned by invading foes, strokes of lightning, etc., in every way to them unaccountable by natural means.

They think this great medicine pervades all air, earth and sky; that it is omnipresent, omnipotent, but subject to be changed and enlisted on their side in any undertaking if the proper ceremonies and sacrifices are made. It is the author of both good and evil according to its pleasure, or in accordance with their attention to their mode of worship.

Its good acts are apparent in years of great abundance of game, seasons of health, triumph over enemies, etc.; and the evil in great distress, losses, defeat, infectious diseases, or any other great misfortune, the cause of which is unknown and cannot otherwise be attributed. And as it seldom happens in their precarious life that the intervals between accidents or calamities are long, this Great Spirit is more feared than loved. Its bounties are passed by unheeded and unthanked, whilst its visitations are fearfully numbered. Power is its attribute and its residence is supposed by some to be in the sun.

They do not acknowledge any separate existing spirit of evil, although they have a name for a being of the kind in their language; yet the idea has been implanted by the whites in late years and is by them but faintly realized. Great evil is a dispensation of the anger of the Great Spirit which it is in their power to avoid by making the proper sacrifices, prayers and fasts, which they all do; yet they make no demonstrations of thanks by offerings or otherwise when success has been the apparent result of their ceremonies. This would seem to prove that they believe the aid of the Great Spirit to have been bought, paid for, by the value of the articles sacrificed, or only a compliance with obligation on its part accruing from their personal infliction of pain.

This great unknown spirit or medicine created all things — a few men and women of different colors first, from which original stock sprang the various races of mankind, whites, Indians, negroes, etc. The Indians, they say, are made naked, but with such qualifications as to suit a hunter — knowledge enough to make and use his arms at war or in the chase, a constitution to stand severe cold, long fasting, excessive fatigue and watchfulness, eyes to see, ears to hear, and legs to follow the game; and therefore they soon felt their superiority over all animals. They believe that all animals are made especially for them, for if not for whom else? They only prey upon each other; besides, Indians could not live without meat. The earth was made for grazing the same animals, for planting corn and raising fuel, all for the use of the Indians. This in the beginning was the work of the Great Spirit. To this being then they make sacrifices and do penance by fasting, making incisions in their bodies and public prayers several times a year. The sacrifices consist principally of scarlet cloth, new kettles, skins and furs, tobacco and other things, which with great solemnity and ceremony are presented to the sun and thunder, the greatest mediums to which they may prove available with the Great Spirit; at the same time the devotee utters a prayer, making requests of the things he most stands in need of, and promising a repetition of the sacrifices in case his demands are complied with. Afterward the article sacrificed is destroyed to prevent its falling into the hands of travelers or enemies. This ceremony is usually made by each Indian alone in his lodge, or on the hills, or in the forests or bushes, several times a year.

Now although they sacrifice, pray, inflict severe punishment on their bodies and starve for days from religious motives, yet all this is only to procure present and temporal advantages. We see nothing in this denoting a moral responsibility — no repentance for past deeds, no thanksgiving for favors received. Crime and sin therefore, as viewed in a Christian light, can have no existence among them. If they felt themselves in any way guilty they would assuredly do penance and offer sacrifice to obtain forgiveness; but we do not find this to be the case with any of them. Moreover, crimes cannot be offenses to the Great Spirit, as we will see hereafter that his aid is invoked to commit the greatest of crimes and sins. Therefore their idea of a Great Spirit is nothing more than a dread of unknown evil befalling them, which it is in their power to avoid by sacrifice, penance, to an unknown incomprehensible power, which they know from actual phenomena has an existence. Further than this they are at a loss. They have no idea of ascribing to it such attributes as mercy, forgiveness, benevolence, truth, etc.; neither will they have, until such words have a signification and appreciation amongst themselves.

This view of the Great Spirit appears to close observers to be the correct and general one of all the prairie tribes, when divested of the superstitions and fabulous narration with which it is often clothed. War and peace could not be regarded as his acts, as they know that they themselves make both; but success or defeat would, as these are beyond their control; therefore a successful warrior is always called *Wakan* (medicine) meaning thereby that he has by some means secured the aid of the Great Spirit. Natural phenomena unattended with good or evil results would pass by unheeded, but destructive tornadoes, death by lightning, by sickness such as apoplexy, would be viewed as his special acts. Eclipses are warnings, severe thunder is a warning, and to these offerings are made with the hope of averting some pending calamity. From this dread of unaccountable evil arises their repugnance to converse on the subject, as to do so would lay open their secret sources of apprehension, and might, they think, by some levity, produce the evil they seek to avoid, or by a counterpoise of sacrifice on the part of some malicious individual, render theirs unavailing. Having explained concisely their idea of the Great Spirit, we will consider some of their minor objects of faith and worship.

Their belief in amulets or charms is general, and the material of these charms or medicines so various, their influence over individuals so diversified, that to enumerate the whole would take too much space and indeed is not requisite. We must, however, endeavor to present the idea which, though well known and realized by us, is nevertheless difficult to explain. It is that although the Great Spirit is all-powerful yet his will is uncertain; he is also invisible and only manifests his power in extraordinary acts, smaller matters being beneath his notice and under supervision of minor spirits. Now it is the want of some tangible medium, consecrated by ceremony, guarded with care, and invoked with solemnity, that induces them to select some object as his medium. Every Indian, upon attaining the age of manhood, becomes a warrior, a hunter, a man of family, and at that time is obliged by his different occupations to live in constant apprehension of his life and property from various enemies and various other causes. He therefore then chooses something for his Wakan (medicine). This object is chosen in consequence of some dream or of some incident or idea presented on an important occasion. In this way a skin of a weasel, heads and bodies of different birds stuffed, images made of wood and stone, of beads worked upon skin, rude drawings of bears, of buffalo bulls, wolves and serpents, of monsters that have no name, nor ever had an existence, in fact, everything animate or inanimate is used, according to the superstition and belief of the individual.

This object, whatever it is, is enveloped in several folds of skin, with a lock of some deceased relative's hair and a small piece of tobacco inclosed and the whole placed in a *parfleche* sack neatly ornamented and fringed, and this composes the arcanum of the medicine sack. This sack is never opened in the presence of any one, unless the owner or some of his family fall dangerously ill, when it is taken out and placed at the head of his bed and the aid of the Great Spirit invoked through it. Ordinarily this sack is opened in secret; the medicine smoked and invoked and prayers and sacrifices made in its presence, and through it, as a tangible medium to the Great Spirit, who is unknown and invisible. No sacrifices are made directly to it, yet it is invoked separately for intercession or rather as a medium for intercession, to avert smaller evils that come under the jurisdiction of lesser spirits, such as appearance of ghosts, diseases of horses or dogs, to find lost or stolen property, for a successful hunt, etc., though not for abundance of game, as the production of game would come within the power of the Great Spirit, though the matter of killing the same would depend upon other powers affected and biased in his favor by the ceremonies to the medium. They know well enough that the material of the charm or medicine has no intrinsic power, neither do they ascribe any to it, the effect lies in their faith in the supernatural, as exhibited to the object as a visible medium. This is in fact the same operation of mind that displays itself in the charms believed in by ignorant whites, and may be considered in that light. Although many white ignorant Christians believe, though erroneously and sinfully, in the charms of quack doctors and old women, fortune-tellers, dreams, ghosts and warnings, yet this does not affect their belief in a Supreme Being; neither does it that of the Indian. As long as he has good luck in his different ordinary undertakings, he will say his "medicine is good;" but should a series of petty misfortunes befall him, he will throw it away and substitute some other. When pictures, medals or crosses are given to them by the missionaries, great care is had to give the Indian the true meaning of the veneration and respect attached to the object.

From the foregoing you can judge whether they are in reality idolaters. That they render a species of worship to objects of almost every description is true, yet their devotion only refers, through these toys, to the source of all power. Even the sun is only worshipped as being the residence of the Great Spirit, not for any supposed power inherent in that planet. They do not believe in the virtue of the material of which their medicine is made; neither do they ascribe to it an immaterial spirit; but the mind by viewing them has a resting point, a something to address in form, not for great favor or aid, but for daily protection from smaller evils. This result is expected by the request being made through an object considered sacred and consecrated by care and ceremony to whosesoever business it is in the realms beyond to superintend these matters. Uneducated and unenlightened as they are, obliged mentally to grasp at protection from supernatural evil in every shape and form, from the great luminary the sun, as the most powerful, to the smallest atoms that might possibly be of some aid, they, through these portions of creation, endeavor by sacrifices, invocations, personal inflictions and fastings, to excite the interest and protection of a great invisible power, to whose approach no certain way in the Indian's belief presents itself. It would appear that in this respect they are not far behind some Christian whites of every country in superstition, who also have their chance, their luck, their fortunes told, and other ideas fully as repugnant to the belief of an all-wise and overruling Providence as the faith of the Indians presents. The very universality of the practice of this sort of idolatry by the Indians proves it to be their true belief, and appears, in fact, an acknowledgment of the existence of an overruling Providence. In accordance with this belief, their prayers and sacrifices are all directed to obtain only temporal and not spiritual welfare. They pray not for what they do not feel to want.

If no moral sense of right and wrong is found amongst them, it must follow that personal advantages are all that is left worth praying or fasting for. If they pray and sacrifice to the sun and thunder, it is in their idea to acknowledge the power of the Creator in these great portions of his work. Great evil, great good is evaded or invoked through these great apparent mediums; smaller evils or benefits are avoided or sought through the medium of charms; yet even these are not expected through the power of the material of the charm, but the consequences attendant on its sacred character as rendered so by constant care, prayers and sacrifices through it to supernatural agencies.

Having shown what is their idea of the Great Spirit and analyzed the nature of their worship, we will next consider what in their opinion is crime. Can the Great Spirit be offended, and if so, what are deemed offenses to it?

The total absence of all moral restraint as regards futurity, and the sole object of their worship being self-aggrandizement in this life, compel us to conclude they have not the faintest idea of any moral responsibility. Crime therefore, of any kind, as viewed by us, viz.: as an offense toward God and to the laws of man, can have no existence with them. Take for instance the greatest of all crimes, murder. An Indian never commits what to him are equivalent to our ideas of murder. As soon as he arrives at the age of manhood he finds himself thrown upon his own resources; he must depend upon himself alone to protect himself, his family, or property, and furnish his household with the means of living. As he is but a hunter, his horse and gun are his fortune; his life, even the lives of all his family, often depend on a few loads of ammunition. Property is of value to the Indian; he has no stock of ready cash to replace it if lost or stolen. Should any one endeavor to impose upon him, take his property or insult his family, to whom shall he look for redress? There are no courts of justice, no prisons or public executions amongst them, and their civil councils take no cognizance of private differences. Therefore he is bound by the nature of his isolated position to be the sole judge of his own acts and self-administrator of justice. He must be firm, obstinate, ready with his knife and tomahawk, as the Indian expresses it, or he is entirely unfit for the station he occupies.

The constant habit of carrying arms induces the necessity of using them, and many petty offenses that would be settled amongst whites with the tongue, or fists, are decided by them with arms. An Indian never strikes but with the intention to kill. Quarrels of all kinds, therefore, being liable to exact extreme measures of redress, they are by no means so common as one would suppose. When each man is aware that his life is at stake, he is cautious how he provokes. But if it be necessary, each will endeavor to take advantage of the other; each is compelled to act so as to save his own life. Indians do not murder each other for their property, because by killing one of his own nation it would have quite a contrary tendency. He would be obliged to fly to another band to avoid being slain by the relations of the deceased, and instead of being gainer by the transaction, would be obliged to abandon his own, to become an outcast, to impoverish all his relations, who never cease paying for the dead to stop further bloodshed, besides placing his own life in constant jeopardy, in case of meeting any of the relations of the murdered man. Therefore, it is entirely out of the question that murder should be deliberately from their cupidity.

The only other way in which one man might kill another would be in quarrel, and this often happens; but no difference what the object of the quarrel, be it a horse, an insult, etc., or who is right or who is wrong; when the difference arises to the point of meriting a blow it becomes absolutely self-defense on the part of both, each to preserve his own life by taking that of his adversary. There is no middle course, and several who have killed their people under these circumstances have regretted, deeply, the necessity, but contended they could not do otherwise. Not to kill when the death of one becomes necessary, from any cause, would be accounted the height of foolishness and cowardice, and ruin an Indian forever with his own people or even with his own family, besides surrendering up his life to the other without a struggle. Therefore, in all cases, murder in their idea is an act of self-defense attendant on their peculiar civil organization. It is an affront to the individual, entailing upon it the risk of a like punishment, by the relations of the deceased, outlawry and poverty, but cannot be considered by them as an offense to the Great Spirit. No man amongst them would kill another for the mere love of killing, for to do so would, as we have shown, subject him to outlawry, assassination and ruin, without any prospect of gain; which would be entirely incompatible with Indian character. The murder of their enemies is considered honorable warfare, the same as among whites; the difference in the manner of its execution is part of their military training. Taking this view of the matter, we can easily perceive how an Indian could, consistently with the former idea of the Great Spirit, pray to it to aid him against his enemies of every kind, whether they be of his own people or of a different nation.

Robbery and theft are not carried on to any extent amongst them, as the former would be punished the same as murder and the latter would subject him to the ridicule of all. Indians will occasionally steal small articles from one another, but when questioned they will say they were in want of them and could not get them any other way. When they rob whites they think they are doing right. With them all whites are interlopers, getting rich from the labors of the Indians, and to take a portion of their goods is nothing more than their due long since in arrears. Therefore, theft is only resorted to as another means of supplying want and the disgrace is thought full punishment. Robbery, when it does occur, is the consequence of some quarrel and merges into the extreme penalty above related. From this we can conceive that neither robbery nor theft can be considered as offenses to the Great Spirit, as it is only another way of the Indian securing means to make a living for himself and family. It is, however, an offense to the individual and punished accordingly. Should an Indian steal a gun or a horse, two of the most valuable articles amongst them, he would give for a reason that he required them for the support of his family. Besides, guns, horses, and even the meat brought into camp are more or less public property; at least, all receive the benefit of the hunter's labor. The horses and guns do not leave the nation; they merely change owners and the produce of each is divided the same as before the theft was committed. In this, therefore, as well as the other, the aid of the Great Spirit would be invoked.

Transgression against the sixth commandment is looked upon by the Indians as an offense to the individual only — husband or father — not to the Great Spirit, and as such is punished by exacting payment — killing or taking the horses of the offender.

With regard to profane swearing, there is no word in the language of the Indians equivalent to even the smallest oath in such general use among civilized Christians. The name of the Great Spirit is seldom mentioned above a whisper and that only in rare and solemn occasions and never in ordinary conversation. In bearing witness an Indian's solemn assurance, or oath, in their form, could be depended upon.

They know not the Sabbath day. Their solemn days are frequent and on these occasions there is a great intensity of devotion in their ceremonies and personal inflictions. From all this it is evident they have no moral accountability. Not feeling themselves guilty of sin, they do no penance for bad deeds. But can the Great Spirit be offended? If so, how? He can be and is offended, they say, by not attending to the proper ceremonies, fasts, penances and sacrifices, sufficient to insure his aid in their greatest undertakings. Therefore the neglect of worship is the only offense. When their ceremonies are performed too seldom, or even the nature of the article sacrificed is not of sufficient value, or when they have promised a sacrifice and not fulfilled the same, his anger is felt in distress of various kinds, such as sickness, death, losses, defeat, famine or in some of the many calamities which it is their intention to avoid by performing their religious rites. Neglect in this point is the only offense, but a great one in their estimation. Hence their obstinate adherence to their ceremonies, upon the fulfillment of which the entire prosperity of the life of the Indian and his family depends. No moral obligation is felt to worship him, neither from the fact of their creation, existence, or with regard to a future state.

This leads us to consider what they believe with regard to futurity. That the soul lives after death is the general assent, and that it is a final state; but by pursuing the inquiry we do not arrive at any certain idea of the soul's occupation there. They always say they don't know. This much, however, some acknowledge, that when they die, their spirit is taken to the south, to a warm country; but this place does not appear to be either in the earth or in the heavens. Here is a state of happiness free from all distress, want, war or accidents. Some are more comfortably situated than others, particularly great warriors and those who have paid especial attention to their religious ceremonies and have offered large sacrifices. No punishment for offense is apprehended, but all is peace, plenty and harmony. If more minutely questioned, they will describe a counterpart of the Mohammedan paradise, or a shadowy image of this life, abstracting the evil. Many of the Indian tribes speak dismally of the future of the wicked; their abode is a place of desolation, destitute of fruits and roots, of animals of all kinds, where perpetual winter reigns — marshy and miry, filled with dangerous reptiles of every description — whilst in the portion of the good reign eternal summer and sunshine, an abundance of the choicest animals of the chase, of fruits and of roots — a place of peace and of never-ending happiness.

There is no resurrection of the body in the creed of the Indians, though they are presumed to have bodies given them in the future state, presenting the same features as in this life, partaking of its nature, but not subject to the same vicissitudes of accidents, sickness, etc. Amongst some there appears to be the idea of two souls, one of the body, which hovers forever near the burial place, and the other of the mind, admitted to this southern paradise. As I have said above, animals of all kinds are found there. It does not appear they are souls of the same who died on this earth, neither is their state of happiness of eternal duration. Reasoning powers and immortality are not ascribed to the brute creation. Anything referring to a future state is rarely made the subject of their conversation. There is a great difference of opinion. Some think death to be a final state of both soul and body, though the ghost of the body remains near its cemetery. In reality, they have but little sincere belief in the existence of a future state, or at least not much importance is attached to the idea during life. At their death, their greatest anxiety appears to be for their families left on earth and not much for what is to become of their souls. They admit its uncertainty and appear not to fear anything on the score of future punishment. Upon the whole, there is nothing in this belief that affects much their general conduct through life, and as little on their deathbed; and from this fact we may reasonably conclude that the foregoing is the correct view of their religion, as they do not feel guilty of offenses toward the Great Spirit, but claim reward for their devotedness in their manner of worship. They have no idea of an atonement or a redeemer who has come on earth to rescue them and to instruct them in the way of salvation. They are seated according to scripture: "In the shadow of death." They must first be taught a correct idea of the Great Spirit, of crime, of right and wrong; their wild passions must be subdued before the Christian principles can be implanted into their hearts.

"Faith is the gift of God." The conversion of these poor heathens is the work of the Lord, for it implies the entire regeneration of the adult Indian, which would be next to a miracle of grace. The task is truly a great one, but with assistance from above it may be overcome. In all my experience among these Indian tribes I have found them always respectful, assiduous and attentive to instruction on the holy word of God. On all occasions they express an earnest willingness or anxiety to have their children instructed in the consoling truths of religion, and in no instance did I ever meet with a spirit of opposition on their part. The work of their conversion requires, no doubt, an abundance of Christian patience, of perseverance and prayers. I am fully convinced that we may reckon on your holy sacrifices and prayers in furthering and promoting this noble work of the Lord. "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Amen.

Your humble brother in Christ, etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

INDIAN LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS.

Potawatomi Legends.

Potawatomi theology — A good spirit and a bad — The creation legend — Warfare of Nanaboojoo and the manitous — The bridge of the dead — The prophet Keokuk and his new religion — The Potawatomies and their territory — Indians sober and drunk — Story of the Piasa bird — Burial customs — The giving of feasts — Story of a father's vengeance.

St. Louis University, January 10, 1847.

Very Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:[1]

AGREEABLY to my promise, I send you the account given by the Potawatomies, residing at Council Bluffs, respecting their own origin, and the causes which gave rise to their "great medicine" and juggling, considered by them as of the highest antiquity. Such superstitions, indeed, are found to exist among all the tribes of the American continent, differing only in the form and the accompanying ceremonies. The Nanaboojoo, or Nanabush, of the Potawatomies, the Wieska, of the Ojibwas, the Wizakéshâk,[2] of the Crees, the Sauteux and the Blackfeet, the Etalapasse of the Chinooks on the coast of the Pacific, can, among these different tribes, be traced up to the same personage.

I send it *verbatim*, as it was communicated to me by Potogojecs, one of the most intelligent chiefs of the Potawatomi nation. Though fabulous, it is not entirely devoid of interest; it should excite us to offer up our prayers the more fervently to the Great Father of Light for these poor benighted children of the forest, and beg of him to send good and worthy laborers into this vast vineyard. Having inquired of this chief what he thought of the Great Spirit, of the Creator, and of the origin of his religion, or great medicine, he replied as follows: "Macketakonia (Black-robe), I will give you a faithful account of what my tribe believes in these matters. We have not, like you, books to transmit our traditions to our children; it is the duty of the old men of the nation to instruct the young people in whatever relates to their belief and their happiness.

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[1] Legend of the Potawatomi Indians as related in a letter to the Father Provincial, dated St. Louis, January 10, 1847. Published as Letters XXV, *Oregon Missions*, XXVII, *Missions de l'Orégon*. The English text is followed here.

[2] Page 525.

"Many among us believe that there are two Great Spirits who govern the universe, but who are constantly at war with each other. One is called the *Kchemnito,* that is, the Great Spirit, the other *Mchemnito,* or the Wicked Spirit. The first is goodness itself, and his beneficent influence is felt everywhere; but the second is wickedness personified, and does nothing but evil. Some believe that they are equally powerful, and through fear of the Wicked Spirit, offer to him their homage and adoration. Others again are doubtful which of them should be considered the more powerful, and accordingly endeavor to propitiate both, by offering to each an appropriate worship. The greater part, however, believe as I do, that *Kchemnito* is the first principle, the first great cause, and consequently ought to be all-powerful, and to whom alone is due all worship and adoration; and that *Mchemnito* ought to be despised and rejected!

"Kchemnito at first created a world, which he filled with a race of beings having nothing but the appearance of men — perverse, ungrateful, wicked dogs — that never raised their eyes to heaven to implore the assistance of the Great Spirit. Such ingratitude aroused him to anger, and he plunged the world in a great lake, where they were all drowned. His anger thus appeased, he withdrew it from the waters, and created anew a beautiful young man, who, however, appeared very sad, and being dissatisfied with his solitary condition, grew weary of life. Kchemnito took pity on him, and gave him, during sleep, a sister, as a companion to cheer his loneliness. When he awoke and saw his sister he rejoiced exceedingly — his melancholy instantly disappeared. They spent their time in agreeable conversation and amusement, living for many years together in a state of innocence and perfect harmony, without the slightest incident to mar the happiness of their peaceful solitude.

"The young man had a dream, for the first time, which he communicated to his sister: 'Five young men,' said he, 'will come this night, and rap at the door of the lodge — the Great Spirit forbids you to laugh, to look at them, or give an answer to any of the first four, but laugh, look and speak, when the fifth presents himself.' She acted according to his advice. When she heard the voice of the fifth, she opened the door to him, laughing at the same time very heartily; he entered immediately, and became her husband. The first of the five strangers, called Sama (tobacco), having received no answer, died of grief; the three others, Wapekone (pumpkin), Eshketâmok (water-melon), and Kojées (the bean), shared the fate of their companion. Tâaman (maize), the bridegroom, buried his four companions, and from their graves there sprang up shortly after pumpkins, water-melons, beans and tobacco plants in sufficient abundance to supply their wants during the whole year, and enable them to smoke to the manitous and in the council. From this union are descended the American Indian nations.

"A great manitou came on earth, and chose a wife from among the children of men. He had four sons at a birth; the first born was called Nanaboojoo, the friend of the human race, the mediator between man and the Great Spirit; the second was named Chipiapoos, the man of the dead, who presides over the country of the souls; the third, Wâbosso, as soon as he saw the light, fled toward the north, where he was changed into a white rabbit, and under that name is considered there as a great manitou; the fourth was Châkekénapok, the man of flint, or fire-stone. In coming into the world he caused the death of his mother.

"Nanaboojoo, having arrived at the age of manhood, resolved to avenge the death of his mother (for among us revenge is considered honorable); he pursued Châkekénapok all over the globe. Whenever he could come within reach of his brother, he fractured some member of his body, and after several rencontres, finally destroyed him by tearing out his entrails. All fragments broken from the body of this man of stone then grew up into large rocks; his entrails were changed into vines of every species, and took deep root in all the forests; the flintstones scattered around the earth indicate where the different combats took place. Before fire was introduced among us, Nanaboojoo taught our ancestors how to form hatchets, lances and the points of arrows, in order to assist us in killing our enemies in war and animals for our food. Nanaboojoo and his brother, Chipiapoos, lived together retired from the rest of mankind, and were distinguished from all other beings by their superior qualities of body and mind. The manitous that dwell in the air, as well as those who inhabit the earth and the waters, envied the power of these brothers, and conspired to destroy them. Nanaboojoo discovered and eluded their snares, and warned Chipiapoos not to separate himself from him a single moment. Notwithstanding this admonition, Chipiapoos ventured alone one day upon Lake Michigan; the manitous broke the ice, and he sank to the bottom, where they hid the body. Nanaboojoo became inconsolable when he missed his brother from his lodge; he sought him everywhere in vain, he waged war against all the manitous, and precipitated an infinite number of them into the deepest abyss. He then wept, disfigured his person, and covered his head, as a sign of his grief, during six years, pronouncing from time to time, in sad and mournful tones, the name of the unhappy Chipiapoos.

"While this truce continued, the manitous consulted upon the means best calculated to appease the anger of Nanaboojoo, without, however, coming to any conclusion; when four of the oldest and wisest, who had had no hand in the death of Chipiapoos, offered to accomplish the difficult task. They built a lodge close to that of Nanaboojoo, prepared an excellent repast, and filled a calumet with the most exquisite tobacco. They journeyed in silence toward their redoubted enemy, each carrying under his arm a bag, formed of the entire skin of some animal, an otter, a lynx, or a beaver, well provided with the most precious medicines (to which, in their superstitious practices, they attach a supernatural power). With many kind expressions, they begged that he would condescend to accompany them. He arose immediately, uncovered his head, washed himself and followed them. When arrived at their lodge, they offered him a cup containing a dose of their medicine, preparatory to his initiation. Nanaboojoo swallowed the contents at a single draught, and found himself completely restored. They then commenced their dances and their songs; they also applied their medicine bags, which, after gently blowing them at him, they would then cast on the ground; at each fall of the medicine bag, Nanaboojoo perceived that his melancholy, sadness, hatred and anger disappeared, and affections of an opposite nature took possession of his soul. They all joined in the dance and song — they ate and smoked together. Nanaboojoo thanked them for having initiated him in the mysteries of their grand medicine.

"The manitous brought back the lost Chipiapoos, but it was forbidden him to enter the lodge; he received, through a chink, a burning coal, and was ordered to go and preside over the region of souls, and there, for the happiness of his uncles and aunts, that is, for all men and women, who should repair thither, kindle with this coal a fire which should never be extinguished.

"Nanaboojoo then redescended upon earth, and, by order of the Great Spirit, initiated all his family in the mysteries of the grand medicine. He procured for each of them a bag well furnished with medicines, giving them strict orders to perpetuate these ceremonies among their descendants, adding at the same time that these practices, religiously observed, would cure their maladies, produce them abundance in the chase and give them complete victory over their enemies. (All their religion consists in these superstitious practices, dances and songs; they have the most implicit faith in these strange reveries.)

"Nanaboojoo is our principal intercessor with the Great Spirit; he it was that obtained for us the creation of animals for our food and raiment. He has caused to grow those roots and herbs which are endowed with the virtue of curing our maladies, and of enabling us, in time of famine, to kill the wild animals. He has left the care of them to Mesakkummikokwi, the earth, the great-grandmother of the human race, and in order that we should never invoke her in vain, it has been strictly enjoined on the old woman never to quit the dwelling. Hence, when an Indian makes the collection of roots and herbs which are to serve him as medicines, he deposits at the same time on the earth a small offering to Mesakkummikokwi. During his different excursions over the surface of the earth, Nanaboojoo killed all such animals as were hurtful to us, as the mastodon, the mammoth, etc. He has placed four beneficial spirits at the four cardinal points of the earth, for the purpose of contributing to the happiness of the human race. That of the north procures for us ice and snow, in order to aid us in discovering and following the wild animals. That of the south gives us that which occasions the growth of our pumpkins, melons, maize and tobacco. The spirit placed at the west gives us rain, and that of the east gives us light, and commands the sun to make his daily walks around the globe. The thunder we hear is the voice of spirits, having the form of large birds, which Nanaboojoo has placed in the clouds. When they cry very loud we burn some tobacco in our cabins, to make them a smoke-offering and appease them.

"Nanaboojoo yet lives, resting himself after his labors, upon an immense flake of ice, in the great lake (the North Sea). We fear that the whites will one day discover his retreat and drive him off, then the end of the world is at hand, for as soon as he puts foot on the earth, the whole universe will take fire, and every living creature will perish in the flames!"

In their festivities and religious assemblies, all their songs turn upon some one or other of these fables. When the chief had finished this history, I asked him whether he had any faith in what he had just related. He answered in astonishment: "Assuredly I have, for I have had the happiness to see and entertain three old men of my nation, who penetrated far into the north, and were admitted into the presence of Nanaboojoo, with whom they conversed a long time. They confirmed all that I have recounted to you!"

Our savages believe that the souls of the dead, in their journey to the great prairie of their ancestors, pass a rapid current, over which the only bridge is a single tree, kept constantly in violent agitation; managed, however, in such a way that the souls of perfect men pass it in safety, whilst those of the wicked slip off the tree into the water and are lost forever.

Such is the narration given to me by the Potawatomi chief, comprising all the articles of the creed held by this tribe; we can hardly fail to recognize in it, much obscured by the accumulation of ages, the tradition of the universal deluge, of the creation of the universe, of Adam and Eve; even some traces of the incarnation are found in the birth of Nanaboojoo; he was descended of parents, one of whom only, his mother, was of the human race; he is, moreover, the interecessor between God and man.

If the early Jesuits or other Christian travelers had never been among these people, or if the Indians had never visited a Christian community, one might infer that they are in some sort direct descendants of Noah, and that they have preserved the tradition of the universal deluge, although obscured, altered and become fabulous in the long succession of ages.

[3]Keokûk, surnamed the Prophet, chief of the Kickapoos, a tribe of the nation of Potawatomies, is the inventor of a new doctrine. He has adherents to the number of about 400, young men for the most part. He claims to have received his religion by supernatural intervention, from the mouth of the Great Spirit himself. He calls himself the envoy of God, Christ under a new form, and invites all the nations of the earth to come and gather under his banner. He adopts sundry moral precepts, among others abstinence from all liquors and the keeping of Sunday. He appears profoundly ignorant of Christian doctrines,[4] and only admits certain points of it which agree with his ideas. His fellow religionists assemble for prayer four times a week between one and three in the afternoon. This prayer consists of a few detached sentences, often repeated in a monotonous musical tone. All perform this in concert, and to keep harmony in the words each holds a small strip of wood in his hand, an inch and a half wide by eight to ten long, upon which some arbitrary characters are traced, which they follow with a finger until the last mark gives warning of the end of prayer.

They reckon five of these characters or marks. The first represents the heart, the second the heart and the flesh, the third life, the fourth their names, the fifth their families. During the service they run over these marks several times. First the person imagines himself as existing upon earth, then he draws near the door of the house of God, etc. Putting their finger upon the lowest mark, they say, "O our Father, make our hearts like thy heart, as good as thine, as strong as thine.—As good as thy house, as good as the door of thy house, as hard and as good as the earth around thy house, as strong as thy walking staff. O our Father, make our hearts and our flesh like thy heart and thy flesh.— As powerful as thy heart and thy flesh.— Like thy house and thy door and thy staff, etc. O our Father, place our names beside thine — think of us, as thou thinkest of thy house, of thy door, of the earth around thy house, etc. O our Father, make our families as holy as thine, as holy as thy house," etc. They repeat this prayer to the point of satiety. There is no question of sin, nor confession, nor repentance, nor penance. In these respects they appear more densely ignorant than the rudest savages; for they, in their sacrificial offerings, recognize their transgressions against the Holy Spirit and the necessity of repentance and penitence. It is savage nature, and every departure from it can only cast them into a deeper abyss. For in religious matters, savages, in their primitive condition, are children of nature; to abandon that state, without being under the influence of the great truths of the Christian religion, is necessarily to follow a downward path.

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[3] The remainder of the Potawatomi legend is translated from *Missions de l'Orégon*, pp. 288–303.

[4] See Catlin, vol. II, pp. 98–100.

To be beaten with a rod is one of the articles of their moral code, and they submit thereto when they have committed some fault. But since in their prayers there is no confession of sin against God, it appears that they only submit to this suffering for the sake of the wholesome effect produced upon the present state of society among them.

The offender, who is often the only one cognizant of his crime, goes to one of the four or five persons authorized to make use of the rod, and declares himself guilty of a transgression, for which he desires to receive a certain number of blows upon his bare back. After the flagellation, which often draws blood, the penitent shakes hands with the operator and the others who are present, and thanks him for the favor he has just done him, declaring that he is relieved of a heavy burden.

Not long ago, the prophet himself had committed so notorious an offense that he could not claim exemption from the rigorous rule of flagellation on the pretext of his lofty dignity. But to lessen the mortification of so public a humiliation, he convoked a council of the elders, in which it was resolved that by reason of a sort of general apostasy of the community, a flagellation of all hands was necessary. A day was set, and every man, woman and child belonging to the sect received the allotted portion of blows upon their backs.

The Potawatomies are divided into two tribes; those of the forests, among whom are a great number of Catholics, and those of the prairies, who have never had priests among them. These last form a mixed nation, composed of Potawatomies, Winnebagoes, Foxes, Chippewas, Sauks, Ottawas, Menominees and Kickapoos; there are more than 3,000 of them. They separated from their brothers of the forests at the beginning of the war for the independence of the United States; one part took the side of the English, the other that of the Republic. The Potawatomies sold their lands in the States of Illinois and Indiana in 1836, receiving from the Government 5,000,000 acres in exchange upon the Missouri, at Council Bluffs, toward the forty-first and forty-second degrees of north latitude. The climate of the country is extremely variable, and thunder storms are very frequent in the months of June and July. The winter is not so long as in Belgium, but the cold is much more intense; on the other hand the heat is much greater in summer. The country in general is composed of fair plains and forests interspersed, and watered throughout by the Missouri. Three other rivers, the Nishnabotna, the Mosquito and the Boyer, traverse it. The Potawatomies are very gentle and tractable by nature; they do not lack spirit and never appear timid; no rank or dignity is known among them; their chief has no other revenue than what his lance, arrows and carbine bring him; his throne is his steed. He promulgates the law, and when he can he executes it. He must be more courageous than his subjects, and never receives any more than each of them in the divisions that they have to make. The first in fight, he is always the last to leave the field.

Most of these savages are capable of sustaining a very interesting conversation, upon matters not out of their range; they love to jest and take a joke very well; they never dispute nor become heated in conversation; they never interrupt any one whomsoever; they always reflect a few moments before answering in an important matter, or else defer their replies to the next day. They have no expression to blaspheme the name of the Lord; their most injurious term is "dog." They live scattered in cabins. The profound peace in which they live comes in large part from their letting every man do what seems to him good. Often years will pass without the least quarrel; but when intoxicated with liquor, which is brought them in large quantities, all their good qualities vanish; they no longer resemble men; everybody takes flight around them; their yells and howls are frightful; they hurl themselves upon each other, bite noses and ears and rend one another in a horrible manner. Since we came among them, four Otoes and three Potawatomies have been killed in drunken rows.

Here is a very singular tradition, which I have from the head chief of the nation; it is current among all the tribes of the Illini, or of the States of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. In ascending the Mississippi, above St. Louis, between Alton and the mouth of the Illinois River, the traveler observes, between two high hills, a narrow passage where a small stream enters the river. This stream is called the Piasa, which means in Indian language "The bird that devours men." At this place appears, on a smooth perpendicular rock, the figure of an enormous bird with outspread wings chiseled in the rock higher than a man can reach. The bird that this figure represents, and whose name is borne by the little stream, has been called the Piasa by the Indians. They say that "several thousand moons before the arrival of the whites, when the great mammoth or mastodon, which Nanaboojoo or Na-na-bush destroyed and whose bones are still found, was feeding on the grass of their immense green prairies, there was a bird of such monstrous bigness that he would carry off an elk in his claws without trouble. This bird, having tasted human flesh one day, would thereafter touch no other meat; his cunning was not less than his might; he would stoop suddenly upon an Indian, carry him away to one of the caverns of the rock and devour him. Hundreds of warriors had endeavored to destroy him, but without success. For several years entire villages were almost devastated, and terror spread among all the tribes of the Illini.

"At last Outaga, a war chief whose fame extended beyond the great lakes, went apart from his tribe, fasted for the space of a moon in solitude and prayed the Great Spirit, the Master of Life, to deliver his children from the claws of the Piasa. The last night of his fast, the Great Spirit appeared to him in a dream and told him to choose twenty warriors, each armed with a bow and a poisoned arrow, and to conceal them in a designated spot. A single warrior should show himself openly to serve as a victim to the Piasa; all the others should let fly their arrows at the bird, as he descended upon his prey. On waking, the chief thanked the Great Spirit and returned to tell his dream to the tribe. The warriors were chosen without delay, armed and set in ambush. Outaga offered himself as the victim; he was ready to die for his nation. Climbing upon an eminence, he saw the Piasa perched on the rock; he stood erect, planted his feet firmly on the ground, and laid his right hand on his heart, which did not flutter, and struck up with a steady voice the death-song of a warrior. At once the Piasa soared aloft and darted like lightning upon the chief. All the bows were stretched and every arrow buried itself to the feather in his body. The Piasa uttered a wild and frightful cry and fell dying at Outaga's feet.

Neither the arrows nor the bird's claws had touched the warrior. The Master of Life, to reward his generous devotion, had suspended an invisible buckler above his head. It is in memory of this event that the image of the Piasa was chiseled into the rock."[5]

Such is the Indian tradition; I give it as it came to me. In any event, it is certain that the figure of an enormous bird is to be seen at an inaccessible height upon the rock, where it appears to be carved. No Indian ever passes by the place in his canoe without firing his gun at it. The marks left by the bullets on the rock are almost innumerable. The bones of thousands of men are piled in the caverns around the Piasa; how, by whom and why it is not easy to guess.[6]

He who has committed a murder is punished with death by the victim's relations, unless he "redeems his own body" and covers the blood by a payment of horses, robes, etc. If he offers himself to them to expiate his crime and no one has the sad courage to take his life, as often happens, then he is "washed of the murder" and need pay nothing. One of our neighbors, who had killed his wife, came off free upon paying a horse to each one of her brothers. The murderer paints his face black and his lips red for a time, to show that he thirsts for blood and means to sate himself.

When a husband or wife dies, the survivor pays to the kinsmen of the deceased the "debt of the body," in money or horses, and according to his or her means; one who should neglect to pay the debt would be in danger of seeing all his possessions destroyed. A wife must wear mourning for a year after her husband's death; that is she may neither comb her hair nor wash herself. When, however, she is eaten up by vermin, a kinswoman of the departed may take pity on her and render her that service.

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[5] Parkman, *Disc. Great West.* Chap. V.

[6] This painting, usually identified with the one described by Marquette in 1673, was visible on a rock at the upper end of the city of Alton, Illinois, until the demolition of the rock, for building-stone, by St. Louis parties in 1866 and 1867. Marquette saw a pair of monsters, each as large as a calf. From information collected by Father Hill, of St. Louis, it appears that in recent times there was only one figure visible, though some claimed to have seen a small figure in front of the large one. It was exposed to southwestern storms and defaced by bul-

The Potawatomi keeps the soul of his dead relation supplied with provisions for a whole year; he throws part of every meal into the fire, thinking that the soul receives comfort and strength thereby. The Otoes, their near neighbors, generally strangle one or two of their best horses on their comrade's grave, that he may ride them in his great journey to the other world; they hang up the tails of these horses on long poles. Their heaven matches their ideas; it is an immense prairie, beyond the sunset, where spring is everlasting, and which is full of countless varieties of grass, buffalo, deer, antelope, bear and all sorts of game.

When a chief or brave of the nation is buried, all the warriors who have taken some trophy from the enemy, gather to pay him the last respects. They accompany the bier to the burial place, where one of the principal orators pronounces the funeral oration. He recalls all the dead man's fine qualities, all the noteworthy actions of his life, the enemies who have fallen under his hatchet, the scalps he has taken and the ferocious beasts he has killed. Then they put him in the grave, his face toward the setting sun; give him his carbine, lance, bow and arrows; fill his powder horn and bullet pouch; place beside him his pipe and well-filled tobacco bag, with some other provisions such as sugar, dried meat, corn, etc.; supplies that might be needful to him on his journey to the land of souls. All wish him a fortunate trip, take his hand for the last time, and the grave is closed. Then they plant before the mound the "post of the

lets, and was of a pale red color; Marquette's monsters were red, black and green. The painting was eighty feet above high water and sixty above the base of the cliff, and fifteen or twenty below its top. Indians of the eighteenth century were remembered to have feared it as powerful medicine, without knowing anything of its origin, and to have invariably discharged all their guns at it when they passed.

braves;" at its top is painted in red the animal or totem, guardian spirit of the dead man, and all present make one or two marks besides; these are red crosses, whereby they mean to represent so many souls of their vanquished enemies, whom they thus devote to the service of their comrade in the other world, as slaves. I have seen posts with 80 to 100 of these crosses upon them.

The parents of one child had contrived a little opening in its grave-mound, to allow passage for the soul. The desolate mother watched the grave for two days, to find whether her little one had met with kindness in the other world, or was unhappy there. She claimed to know by these signs; if she saw a pretty bird or some beautiful insect, it was a favorable omen; but if she met a disgusting reptile or a bird of prey, then all was lost for her child. Fortunately the weather was serene, and butterflies and other lovely insects of every kind and color were flitting all about. The poor mother therefore returned comforted to her home.— She came to see me afterward, for instruction in our holy religion and to have her two little girls baptized.

As soon as an Indian desires to marry, he manifests his inclination by playing upon a certain kind of flute called *popokwen;* he roams through the village, suitably painted and adorned, and gives frequent serenades before the abode of her whom he has chosen for companion. As soon as the girl consents to marry him, the parents or brothers fix the price; he has to give each of them a horse, or some other valuable object, and she is turned over to him. Mostly, however, they sell the girl to whomsoever they see fit without consulting her inclinations; and the women are so used to this that they seldom murmur or complain.

An Indian's wife is truly a slave. They say that the Great Spirit (Kchemnito) in a council that he held with their forefathers, decided "that the men should protect the women and hunt the animals; that all the rest should be the duty of the women;" and they hold scrupulously by this decision. The wife alone therefore is charged with all the work of the household; she washes, mends, cooks, builds the cabins, tills and sows the fields, cuts the wood, etc.; so too she appears old at thirty or thirty-five years. As for the men, except for the hunts that they make from time to time, they lead an entirely idle life; they talk, smoke, play cards or hide the ball under the slipper, and that is all.

When a child is to be named, the parents make a great feast; they send to each of the guests, by way of invitation, a little scrap of tobacco leaf or a small stick; this is their manner of inviting. After the meal, the eldest of the family proclaims the name, which generally has reference either to some distinguishing mark, or to some dream of the child's, or to some good or evil characteristic by which he may have made himself known. With boys, this ceremony takes place when they attain their seventeenth year. They have to undergo beforehand a very strict fast of seven or eight days, during which the parents recommend to their child to pay great attention to dreams that the Great Spirit may send him, which are to reveal his future destiny; he will know if he is to be a great chief or a good hunter by the number of animals that fall beneath his hatchet or of scalps won from the enemy in his dreams. The animal that appears to him is to become his manitou or totem, and all his life long he must bear some token of it about him; claw, tooth, tail or feather, it matters not what.

The caste of false ministers of religion among the Indians is known under the name of Big Medicine; those who belong to it form a band by themselves. Each of them is provided with a bag, which contains sundry roots and medicinal plants, to which they pay a sort of worship. They guard the utmost secrecy as to their beliefs, and are very close about admitting new members. They dance and sing a great deal in their reunions, and give one another hard knocks, squeezing their medicine bags under their arms. One very noteworthy thing which I have from several eyewitnesses, is that they confess themselves conquered and cease their superstitious performances, whenever a baptized person, wearing a token of his religion, such as a cross or a blessed medal, comes near their meeting place. An old woman, whom I am instructing at this time and who long belonged to the Big Medicine, has been threatened with death by the jugglers if she becomes a Christian; still she remains firm in her good resolutions. The example of her husband and her six children, whom I have baptized, encourages her to brave these menaces. The chiefs of this sect are feared among the savages and impose greatly on their credulity; they make the poor Indians believe that they can at will take the form of a serpent, bear, wolf or any other animal; that they can foretell the future and discover murder and theft. Their knowledge of herbs allows them often to make extraordinary cures. After administering the medicine to the sick, they utter cries and yells, pretend to suck the malady from the body by long tubes, dance around the sufferer and perform the most astonishing antics before him.

There is a tradition among the Potawatomies that there is in the moon an old woman, always busy at the making of a big basket. If she succeeds in finishing her task the world must perish; but a great dog is watching her continually, and destroys her work as often as she has it nearly done. The fight between the dog and the woman takes place at every eclipse of the moon. The big dog is the black spot that appears on the south of that luminary.

The Potawatomi who gives frequent feasts is, according to the expression of their songs, one of the heroes of the village. At the beginning of winter, when the hunt has been successful, every lodge presents a scene of rejoicing. Night and day the sound of the flute is heard, together with the deafening clamor of the *teweêken* or drum, accompanying the monotonous songs of the savages. There is a sacred cu[illegible]m among them, that he who gives the feast may take n[illegible]are in it himself; he would be dishonored and deemed sacrilegious. The hunter cuts up the animal that he has killed into as many pieces as he wishes to send invitation-sticks to his friends. Any one who cannot come to the feast sends back the stick with some tobacco or some other small present to smooth over his refusal. Generally the whole village is invited, for each of the inhabitants lives in a continual dread of being poisoned by some jealous neighbor. A savage keenly resents a slight or snub; he is vindictive in the extreme, and vengeance being a virtue, according to his ideas, sooner or later he will find an occasion to vent all his anger upon any one who has dared to scorn him.

The tragic story which I am about to relate is a striking proof of this. I have it from the nephew of Kitchechaonissi himself. One of the finest villages of the Potawatomies, before their emigration to Council Bluffs, was on the point where the Kankakee and Des Plaines rivers unite to form the Illinois. Kitchechaonissi or Great South Wind, a famous warrior, was their chief. His bravery made him feared; but at the same time, by his fatherly kindness, he had won the esteem and love of all his people. He was so fortunate as to have six sons, brave as himself and excellent hunters. He often gave feasts and entertainments to all his village. Sometimes, however, he dared to brave one or another of his neighbors, neglecting, whether in contempt or for any other cause, to send them invitation sticks.

The Indians carry their knowledge of poisons and of the art of administering them very far; they make use of them with admirable dexterity upon whomsoever displeases them. The five eldest sons of Kitchechaonissi died one soon after another in the course of the same year, victims of the secret vengeance of some envious or vindictive savage. The old man's grief was long and bitter; years passed without his giving a single feast, and he obstinately refused all invitations. His remaining son was his only consolation, his sole hope and the prop of his old age. Endowed with all good qualities in mind and body, brave in war, skillful in the chase, he was especially noted for a filial devotion and submission, until then unequaled among the Indians. Kitchechaonissi loved him as much as a father and chief can love a distinguished son, the favorite of the village, the hero of the nation. His only pleasure was to deck him with the richest and finest adornments known to the nations. The son, by his assiduous care, had brought back the old brave to his former serenity, and apparently to all his happiness.

One day he returned from the hunt with a large bear that he had killed, and according to his custom he laid it at the feet of Kitchechaonissi. The old man bade him cut up the beast and invite all the elders of the village to the Feast of the Bear. Through oversight, the young hunter forgot four old men of the great medicine band; but he resolved to return to the desert immediately after the feast, in order to invite them the first to a second banquet. The mirth and rejoicings of the people were great on this occasion, for it was the first time since the death of his five sons that this beloved chief had taken part in a great solemnity. Everything went off most harmoniously. Kitchechaonissi was at the height of pleasure, listening to the praises of his son, and the songs that celebrated his great bravery and lofty virtues. Alas! grief followed closely this paternal triumph; the next day the young hero found himself unwell; the most famous jugglers were called in to his aid; but all their methods, songs, dances, the power of their breath, were practiced to no avail; the sickness quickly made fearful progress, and on the eighth day, all the village, mourning and weeping, accompanied Waâpekiejeck, the Dawn, which was the young warrior's name, to the tomb of his unhappy brothers.

Kitchechaonissi painted himself black and disappeared from the village, after the burial; his people sought him everywhere, but in vain. He had withdrawn to the most desert place, among the cliffs, to weep. Often, in the bitterness of his heart, he prayed the Master of Life to permit him to go and join his dear children in the land of souls. One day while seated at the edge of a torrent plunged in reveries, he thought he heard a voice saying, "Rise, Kitchechaonissi, rise quickly; cross the river, climb the steep hills, and you shall see your son whom you so mourn." He rose at once; the sun had just finished his course and disappeared behind the distant bluffs. The old man looked about him on all sides; but seeing no one, he raised his eyes and hands toward heaven, exclaiming "How now! shall I see my son? My fingers closed his eyes; my hands dug his grave; my lips kissed his pale and livid brow, before lowering him beside his unhappy brothers!" But an irresistible power seemed to drag him on; he obeyed it. He threw himself into the torrent and gained the opposite shore; it was a desert place, difficult of access. How great was his surprise when he heard the dull sound of a drum, coming from a ravine on the farther side of the great hill. Like the hunter who has found the trail of the animal he pursues, the old man crossed the high mound with a speed astonishing for his age. The sound of the drum becomes louder and louder as he proceeds, and his uneasiness and curiosity are extreme. He stops an instant to take breath, and to look about him with caution. He soon discovers, in a deep ravine, a bark lodge, whence the noise issues. Under cover of the darkness he hastens with a light step toward the mysterious spot. He trembles in all his limbs; his blood is ice in his veins; scarcely can he breathe. A thousand phantoms rise before his imagination, excited and disturbed by so many troubles. The promise that he had heard upon the rock, "You shall see your son," at last reanimates his courage. He takes a few steps forward, looks in at a chink in the lodge, and is seized with astonishment, indignation and horror; he recognizes the four old men who did not take part in the Feast of the Bear, busied in horrid incantations with their medicine bag spread out before them. He looks more closely and sees five skulls upon posts. He goes around the cabin, looks through another crack, and discovers by the firelight a fifth Indian standing motionless at the farther end of the lodge.— Is it his son? He examines him attentively. He has the same garments, the same ornaments, with which he was buried. It was thus that he had painted his face at his last feast.— But why this livid hue, these closed eyes, this corpselike appearance? How has he come to this fearful desert? and in a society a thousand times more fearful yet? For a long time Kitchechaonissi had suspected these four old men of being the cause of his sorrows. Thoughts of vengeance, hope, doubt, were toiling in his breast. He knew not what to do; he watched all their motions and listened attentively. The one who had the drum began beating it again; the next shook his gourd rattle, the third blew the flute, while the fourth addressed the most insulting language to the young hero, boasting at the same time of the great power of their medicines, which neither he nor his brothers had been able to resist. Like a tiger, or a lioness robbed of her young ones, Kitchechaonissi felt all at once his vigor return, his blood boiled in his veins. Armed with his terrible tomahawk, he rushed into the lodge and discharged all his fury upon the terrified murderers of his children; he laid them all dead at his feet, and they dared not try to resist him. Then he went to embrace his son, and found that he had in his arms only his stuffed skin.— This occurrence was soon known to all the village; the young man's grave was opened; his remains were not there, nor those of his brothers. Circumstances proved beyond a doubt that the old men were the poisoners, and that they had received, according to Indian customs, the just penalty of their crimes.

I have the honor to be, etc.

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[7] Their songs always have some bearing on their religious opinions; they often address them to Na-na-bush, or the

[7] Extract from manuscript letter on the Potawatomies, dated Council Bluffs, St. Joseph Mission, August 20, 1838.

Friend of Man, the nephew of the human race. They beg him to be their spokesman, and present their prayers to the Master of Life. Often too they are consecrated to Me-suk-kum-ik-okwi, or the Earth, the great-grandmother of the human race. They tell in these songs how Na-na-bush created the earth by the Great Spirit's orders, and how the great-grandmother received a command to provide for all the wants of the uncles and aunts of Na-na-bush; meaning thereby men and women. Na-na-bush, always the benevolent intercessor of the human race, obtained from the Great Spirit the creation of animals; their flesh was to serve as food and their skins for raiment. He procured also for mankind medicinal roots and herbs of sovereign power, to cure their maladies and enable them to kill the animals in the chase. All these things were intrusted to Me-suk-kum-ik-okwi, and in order that Na-na-bush's uncles and aunts might never invoke her in vain, he asked her always to stay at home. For this reason, when an Indian is digging up medicinal roots, he always deposits in the ground his little offering to Me-suk-kum-ik-okwi.

All these songs are marked down on birch bark or on little flat pieces of wood. The ideas are expressed by emblematic figures.

They believe the thunder to be the voice of certain living beings. Some think that these beings resemble men, others that they have the form of birds. Every time that it thunders, they burn tobacco, offering it as a sacrifice to the thunder. It is doubtful whether they know the connection between the thunder and the lightning-flash that precedes it.

CHAPTER IX.

AN OLD DELAWARE LEGEND.[1]

Sorrows of the daughter of Wawanosh — Delaware legend of the rainbow.

TWO centuries have passed away since the fame of Wawanosh was sounded along the shores of Lake Superior. He was a Delaware chief of an ancient line, who had preserved the chieftainship in their family from the remotest times, and in consequence had a lofty pride of ancestry. To the reputation of his birth, he added the advantages of a tall and commanding person, and the dazzling qualities of great personal strength, courage and activity. His heavy bow was renowned for its dimensions throughout the surrounding plains, and he was known to have shot one of his flint-headed arrows through the body of a deer. His counsel was as much sought as his prowess was feared; so that he came in time to be equally famed as a hunter, a warrior, and a sage. But he had now passed the meridian of his days, and the term "Ak-kee-wai-zee," "one who has been long above the earth," was familiarly applied to him. Such was Wawanosh, to whom the united voice of the nation awarded the first place in their esteem, and the highest seat in authority. But pride was his ruling passion. Wawanosh had an only daughter, who had now lived to witness the budding of the leaves for the eighteenth spring. Her father was not more celebrated for his deeds of strength than she for her gentle virtues and all the accomplishments of an Indian maid.

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[1] The name Delaware, that the Indians of this nation bear, was given them by the whites. It is derived from Lord Delaware, one of the early English colonial governors in America. Among themselves these people are called Lenni Lennapi or the primitive nation. They resided anciently in a great country west of the Mississippi. With the "Five Nations" so renowned in the Indian history of this continent, they seized and occupied a large territory southeast of their ancient domain. In the course of this long migration, the Delawares divided into three great tribes, called the Tortoise tribe, the Turkey tribe and the Wolf tribe. In the time of William Penn they occupied the whole of Pennsylvania, and extended from the Potomac to the Hudson. As the white population began to increase, strengthen and extend over these vast territories, the Delawares (like all the other tribes) found it necessary to plunge deeper into the forests and plains, and yield to their conquerors or usurpers. While a great part of the nation established themselves on the Ohio, or the margin of the Muskingum, others regained the shores and the forests of the Mississippi, whence, according to their traditions, their ancestors had set forth. When colonies of Europeans came to take possession of that large and handsome river, which the celebrated Jesuit Marquette first discovered, and [to which he] gave the now consoling and sublime name of the "Immaculate Conception," they repulsed once more the Delawares, and Government granted these Indians a little territory southwest of Fort Leavenworth on the Missouri. In 1854 the Delawares ceded this last foothold to the United States.—*Author's Note.*

Her hand was sought by a youth of humble parentage, who had no other merits to recommend him but such as might arise from a tall and graceful person, a manly step, and an eye beaming with the fires of youth and ardent attachment. These were sufficient to attract the favorable notice of the daughter, but were by no means satisfactory to the father, who sought an alliance more suitable to his rank and the high pretensions of his family.

"Listen to me, young man," replied Wawanosh to the trembling hunter who had sought the interview, "and be attentive to what you hear. You ask me to bestow upon you my daughter, the chief solace of my age and my choicest gift from the Master of Life. Others have asked of me this boon, who were as young, as active, and as ardent as yourself. Some of these persons have had better claims to become my son-in-law. Young man, have you considered well who it is that you would choose for a father-in-law? Have you reflected upon the deeds which have raised me in authority, and made my name known to the enemies of my nation? Where is the chief who is not proud to be considered the friend of Wawanosh? Where is the hunter who can bend the bow of Wawanosh? Where is the warrior who does not wish to be one day the equal in bravery of Wawanosh? Have you not heard that my fathers came from the far east decked with eagle plumes (marks of bravery) and clothed with authority?

"And what, young man, have you to boast of that you should claim an alliance with my warlike line? Have you ever met your enemies on the battle-field? Have you ever brought to the camp a trophy of victory? Have you ever proved your fortitude by suffering protracted pain, enduring continued hunger, or sustaining great fatigue? Is your name known beyond the humble limits of your native village? Go then, young man, and earn a name for yourself. It is none but the brave who can ever hope to claim an alliance with the wigwam of Wawanosh. Think not my ancient blood shall mingle with the humble mark of the *Awonsees* (a kind of fish), fit *totem* (family distinction) for fishermen."

The humbled and intimidated youth departed; but he resolved to do a deed that should render him worthy of the daughter of Wawanosh, or die in the attempt. He called together several of his young companions and equals in years and imparted to them his design of conducting an expedition against the enemy, and requested their assistance. Several embraced the proposal immediately; others were soon persuaded into it, and before ten suns had set he saw himself at the head of a formidable party of young warriors, all eager, like himself, to distinguish themselves in battle.

Each warrior, according to the custom of the day, was armed with a bow and a quiver of arrows, tipped with flint or jasper. He carried a *mush-kee-moet* or knapsack upon his back, provided with a small quantity of parched and pounded corn, mixed with a little *pemmican* or pounded drymeat. He was furnished with a *puggamaugun,* or war-club, of hard wood, fastened to a girth of deer-skin, and a kind of stone knife. In addition to this, some carried the ancient *sheesheegwun,* or Indian lance, consisting of a smooth pole about six feet in length, with a spear of flint firmly tied on with splints of hard wood, bound down with deer sinews. Thus equipped, and each warrior painted in a manner to suit his own fancy, and ornamented with appropriate feathers, they repaired to the spot appointed for the war dance.

A level grassy plain extended for nearly a mile from the lodge of Wawanosh toward the point of land called *Shog-woi-ma-koony.* Lodges of bark were promiscuously interspersed over this green, with here and there a cluster of trees or a solitary pine which had escaped the fury of tempests for so many years. A beach of yellow sand skirted the lake shore in front, and a tall forest of oaks, pines and poplars formed the background. In the centre of this green stood a large shattered pine; with a clear space around, renowned as the scene of the war dance, time out of mind. Here the youths assembled, with their tall and graceful leader, distinguished by the feathers of the white eagle which adorned his head. A bright fire of pine wood blazed upon the green. He led his men twice and thrice in a circle around this fire, with a measured step and solemn chant. Then suddenly halting, the war-whoop was raised, and the dance immediately began. An old man sitting at the head of the ring beat time upon the drum, while several of the warriors shook their *sheesheegwuns,* and ever and anon made the woods re-echo with their yells.

Thus they continued the dance for two days and nights, with short intermissions; when dropping off, one by one, from the fire, each sought his own way to the place appointed for the rendezvous, on the confines of the enemies' country.

Their leader was not among the last to depart; before leaving the village he bid an affectionate adieu to the daughter of Wawanosh. He imparted to her his firm determination to perform an act that would establish his name as a warrior, or die in the attempt. He told her of the bitter pangs he had felt at her father's taunts; that his soul spurned the imputations of cowardice implied by his language. He declared that he never could be happy, either with or without her, until he had proved to the whole tribe the strength of his heart, which is the Indian term for courage. He said his dreams had not been so propitious as he could wish, but that he would not cease to invoke the favor of the Great Spirit in his behalf. He repeated his protestations of invincible attachment, which she returned, and pledging vows of mutual fidelity, they separated.

All she ever heard of the young warrior after this interview was that he had received an arrow in his breast, after having distinguished himself by the most heroic bravery. The enemy fled, leaving many of their warriors dead on the field. On examining his wound, it was perceived to be beyond their power to cure. He languished a short time, and expired in the arms of his friends.

From that hour no smile was ever seen in the once happy lodge of Wawanosh. His daughter pined away by day and by night. Tears and sighs, sorrow and lamentation were heard continually. No efforts to amuse were capable of restoring her lost serenity of mind. Persuasion and reproof were alternately employed, but employed in vain. It became her favorite custom to fly to a sequestered spot in the woods, where she would sit under a shady tree and sing her mournful laments for whole hours together.

Thus she daily repeated her plaintive song. It was not long before a small bird of beautiful plumage flew upon the tree beneath which she usually sat; and with its sweet and artless note seemed to respond to her voice. It was a bird of a strange appearance; such as she had never seen before. It came every day and sang to her, remaining until it became dark. Her fond imagination soon led her to suppose it was the dead warrior's spirit, and her visits were repeated with greater frequency.

She did nothing but sing and fast. Thus she pined away, until death, which she so frequently desired, came to her relief. After her decease, the bird was never more seen; and it became a popular opinion that this mysterious bird had flown away with her spirit to the happy land of life. But the bitter tears of remorse fell in the lodge of Wawanosh; and he lived many years to regret his false pride and his harsh treatment of the noble youth.

Thus far the legend which I hold from a worthy sachem of the Lenni Lennapi nation or Delawares.

The Indian Tradition of the Flood and the Rainbow.[2]

This is the opinion concerning the rainbow and the deluge, which I have found among the Lenni-Lennapi or Delawares,[3] who inhabit the Territory of Kansas in the United States.

Sin-go-wi-chi-na-xa[4] is the name the Lenni-Lennapi, or First People, give to the rainbow. It is a very significant word; it comprehends a great many things and can hardly be translated. I will try, however, to give the literal signification. Sin-go-wi-chi-na-xa means a large luminous circle, composed of several narrow circles, differing from one another in color, but so mingled that no line of demarcation can be observed between them.

The following is the tradition that is handed down in this tribe. The rainbow dates from the oldest times. After the creation of the earth, the Great Spirit covered it with a dark blue and azure vault. A great uneasiness took possession of the heart of the spirit or Manitou of the Waters. He feared that the rain would no longer be able to penetrate this azure blackness, and that consequently the element in which he had his pleasure and which yielded him existence, namely, water, would fail him, and that he, abandoned and without a dominion, would become an object of scorn and ridicule among the other tutelary spirits of the earth. The Spirit of the Waters therefore made a humble appeal to the Great Spirit, praying him to have pity on him and not permit so great a calamity to come upon him.

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[2] From the French of the third Belgian edition.

[3] Father De Smet does not appear ever to have been among the Delawares. His informant in the lore of that nation was Reverend Father Beschor, Delaware and Jesuit, whose story he has told under the name of Watomika.

[4] The letter x is used to indicate the German ch-sound.

The plaintive words of the Spirit of the Waters went to the heart of the Great Spirit, and he was penetrated by pity and compassion. For this reason he deigned to open an attentive and benevolent ear to his discourse.

The Great Spirit therefore assured the Spirit of the Waters that his fears were unfounded, and as a proof, he commanded the Spirit of the Wind, who resides in the region of the setting sun, to blow with impetuosity. Immediately thick and sombre clouds were seen above the western horizon. They spread abroad with great rapidity, until the black azure of the firmament, which had so greatly alarmed the Spirit of the Waters, had entirely disappeared.

Then the voice of the Great Spirit was heard amid the clouds. Its sound was heavy, deep and prolonged, resembling the noise of bellowing waters falling in a multitude of cataracts, falls or cascades.

At the same instant, the Spirit of the Rain, the brother of the Spirit of the Waters and the Spirit of the Wind, broke forth and loosed himself in torrents. The waters fell and continued to fall, until the rivers and lakes had overflowed their limits and covered the surface of the earth. The birds took refuge in the highest branches of the trees, and the animals sought the summits of the loftiest mountains.

At this sight, the heart of the Spirit of the Waters became calm and tranquil once more; he ceased to dread and to doubt his lot.

His submission was agreeable to the Great Spirit, and he ordered the rain to cease and the clouds to disappear, at sight of the luminous circle called Sin-go-wi-chi-na-xa.

Ever since that time, the Lenni-Lennapi salute the rainbow whenever it is displayed, because they regard it as a certain sign of the benevolent disposition of the Great Spirit.

Such is the tradition of the rainbow among the Delawares, and it is evidently the altered history of the deluge. How did this knowledge reach these savages? It is evidently one of the secrets of God.

CHAPTER X.

TCHATKA,[1] THE CHIEF OF THE ASSINIBOINS.

Tchatka's beginnings as a medicine man — Removal of his uncle — Poison and pyrotechnics — A big drum — A medicine dream — A successful war-party — Abundant scalps — Marries plentifully — His coadjutor — Reverses on the warpath — Attempts seizure of Fort Union — Runs out of poison — Disastrous defeat — Predicts his own death — Notes on the Assiniboins.

Reverend Father:

YOU have received the address of Matau-Witko,[2] or Crazy Bear, the present chief of the Assiniboins. This has shown the favorable dispositions entertained by that chief for our holy religion. I spoke to you of their hunts, of an expedition of peace and war sent by the Crows, or *Absharokays*, to the Blackfeet, or *Ziarsapas*,[a] their inveterate enemies. I have described the Assiniboin worship, which, in regard to ceremonies, superstitious practices, and various point of belief, resembles all others in use among the different Indian tribes of the Upper Missouri.

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[1] The story of Tchatka was furnished Father De Smet by the Indian trader, Edwin T. Denig, and was sent in French to Reverend Father Terwecoren, editor *Précis Historiques.* It forms Letter XIII, Second Series, *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres* and *Western Missions and Missionaries.* The latter text is here followed.

[2] Maximilian of Wied mentions this chief, calling him Manh-Ouitkatt, or l'Ours Fou. He appears also in Larpenteur as Crazy Bear, and is there said to have proved the greatest chief of the Assiniboins. "Tchatka" means left hand in the Assiniboin language. Maximilian of Wied saw this chief leading the attack on Fort Mackenzie, August 28, 1833; gives his name as Minohenne (which would apparently mean something about water) and says he assumed the name Tatogan, or Antelope, after that occurrence. Tchatka appears occasionally in Larpenteur's journal, where he is called Gauché, and nicknamed Co-han — "hurry up." He is described as a "queer kind of grizzly-bear fellow, very odd in his way," and as "the terror of all the neighboring tribes." Left Hand is still told of by old Assiniboins, and a lineal descendant of his, named Left Handed Bear, is (1903) living on one of the Montana reservations. In Father De Smet's manuscript letters he calls him variously Gaucher, Gauchet and Gauché.

These details must have given you an idea of the depth of heathen darkness in which the North American Indians are yet shrouded. How worthy, alas! are they of exciting Christian compassion and devotedness! How noble the mission of rescuing the minds and hearts of this despised and forlorn race from the degrading superstitions and infamous cruelties to which they are abandoned: of sowing in that uncultivated soil the mustard seed, which will spring up and bear the immortal blossoms of present and future happiness!

Some of our Fathers are already engaged in this noble task. It is to be hoped that a greater number may be inspired to join them in bearing the torch of faith to all the nations which deserve it, and incessantly implore Blackrobes. I speak from actual knowledge when I say that most of the nations of the great desert manifest a desire for instruction, and listen willingly to the word of the Lord.

To initiate you still further in the knowledge of Indian manners and customs, I have thought that you would be pleased to receive a sketch of the life of the most renowned chief of the Assiniboins. He was a crafty, cruel, deceitful man, a bad Indian in every sense of the word; his whole life was full of horrors. For forty years he led his tribe in the forest. At the commencement of his career, his band numbered over 2,000. He led them from war to war, sometimes with success, often with reverse. Disease thinned the band — poison and battle wasted them like snow. When they were but a handful, he beheld the remnant of his gallant band disperse and seek an asylum in a more powerful and numerous camp. He died as he had lived. Either from fear, jealousy or hatred, he had recourse to poison to rid himself of all who opposed him. Pursued by remorse and despair, he used the same means to put an end to his own days. He died in most terrible convulsions. This story will show you that the Indians, too, have their Neros and Caligulas.

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[a] Father De Smet has here confused different families known by the name of Blackfeet. The Sihasapa are a division of the Teton Sioux, elsewhere called by him Blackfoot-Sioux, and they have nothing to do with the Blackfeet proper.

All the accounts that I have read on the statistics of the Indians, show that their numbers constantly decrease. To what is this remarkable decline to be ascribed? The history of the Assiniboin tribe, led by this wicked chief, is more or less the history of the decline of the other tribes. Ambitious chiefs and partisans keep up incessant wars in their tribes, and unknown diseases thin them. Then comes the acquaintance with the whites; the Indians learn, and easily adopt, the vices and excesses of the pioneers of our civilization. The spirituous liquors, which they offer the Indians in abundance — more terrible than war — sweep them off by hundreds, and they disappear, leaving behind them only sad mounds, as tombs, which dot the plains and highlands by the river-side, till the plow at last levels these last vestiges of a race.

If time permits, I will hereafter give some details on the present condition of the Indian tribes under the domination of the Great Republic. The Government has just organized, in the western desert, two new Territories — Kansas and Nebraska.[4] They embrace an extent of neither more nor less than between 500,000 and 600,000 square miles. They will then be divided into several States, and each of these States will be larger than France. Whites are already pouring in in thousands, all hastening to take possession of the best sites. The law has just passed; no steps are yet taken to protect the Indians, and already fifty new towns and villages are in progress; barns, farms, mills, etc., rise on all sides as though by enchantment. I did not then think that the moment of invasion was so near.

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[4] Nebraska Territory extends to 49° north, the northern boundary of the United States; on the south, the line of 40° separates it from Kansas; its eastern limit is the White river and the Missouri, which separate it from Minnesota and Iowa; on the west, it extends to the Rocky Mountains.

Kansas Territory extends three degrees, or 208 miles, farther south; on the east is the State of Missouri; on the north, the thirty-seventh degree separates it from the Cherokee Reservation; on the west, it is bounded by the Rocky Mountains.

These two Territories contain over 500,000 square miles, or forty times the surface of Belgium.—*Author's Note.*

The narrative with which I will entertain you to-day is well known in all the region where the scenes occurred. I have it from two most reliable sources — that is to say, from a man of tried probity and veracity, Mr. Denig, of the St. Louis Fur Company, and from a worthy Canadian interpreter. Both resided many years among the Assiniboins, and knew the subject of the story, and witnessed many of his acts.

This hero is Tchatka or le Gaucher, an Assiniboin chief. He exercised, during his long career, more power over the band or tribe that he led and governed, than any other savage Nestor whose history I have learned. He had received several names; but that of Gaucher, or Awkward, is that by which he was known among the *voyageurs*[8] and fur-traders. His other names were, Wah-kon-tangka, or Big Medicine; Mina-Yougha, or the Knifeholder; and Tatokah-nan, or the Kid. These titles were bestowed on him at different periods of his life, in memory of some remarkable deed by which he had distinguished himself, and which will appear in the course of my narrative.

The family of Tchatka was very numerous, and enjoyed great influence. As the members purposed electing him their chief, and conductor of the camp, as soon as he should attain his majority, he attracted the attention of the northern fur-traders of Upper Canada and the Hudson Bay Company's territory. The intimacy which he cultivated with the whites, united to a high degree of native cunning, proved the means of his acquiring many arts, which gave him on his return a kind of distinction among his people. He had also obtained, by means of a white man, a quantity of poison, and had learned its properties and use. Tchatka was an unprincipled, deceitful, cunning, cowardly man. Although young and vigorous he always kept out of danger. While the warriors of his tribe were fighting in the plain, he would be seated on a hill or some other spot from which he could observe all that passed. He had been initiated into all the tricks of the jugglers. He never performed incantation and juggleries without a good horse beside him, on which he sprang in case of defeat. He was always the first to escape, abandoning the combatants to their own luck, and got off as well as he could. As we shall see in the sequel, he became chief of 280 lodges, or about 1,200 warriors. The great confidence which they had in their leader seems to have been the cause of his great success in the war against the Blackfeet and other enemies of the nation.

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[8] I use the word *voyageur*, a Canadian term, adopted in English to designate the white hunters of the West, a peculiar set of men.—*Author's Note.*

As soon as Tchatka had attained the requisite age, he used every effort to attain his object and satisfy his ambition. He calculated the advantages and ascendency he would obtain over the people by becoming initiated in the great band of medicine men or jugglers,* and he pretended to the gift of prophecy. A second motive for this initiation was, that he might thereby conceal his want of bravery — a quality indispensable in a chief. Many remarkable stories are related of his exactitude in predicting future events, and for which the simple savages could give no explanation.

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* The Wah-kons, or medicine men, among the American Indians, and the Panomoosi of Northern Asia, belong to the same class. In both hemispheres these charlatans pretend to heal diseases by witchcraft; they predict the issue of wars and hunts. In all cases they pretend to be inspired by manitous; that is, divinities or spirits. They generally retire to the depth of the forests, where they pretend to fast for several days, and often practice very rigorous penances, consisting especially in

Tchatka was not ignorant that there were several persons in the tribe whose influence was great, who were older than he, and who had acquired by their valor in war, and by their wisdom in the council, real titles to the dignity of head chief. In order to arrogate to himself the sole government of the camp, he conceived the frightful design of getting rid of his competitors. He brought to the execution of his project all his cunning and deceit. I have already alluded to the poisons in his possession. By secret experiments he became well informed concerning their power and influence. He administered them himself, or by the hands of others, so adroitly that not the least suspicion was excited. His character of prophet came to his aid. He predicted to his victims, often several weeks and months before the event, that they had not long to live, according to the revelations of his Wah-kon, and manitous or spirits. The accomplishment of this species of prediction established his reputation; he obtained the title of "Strong in Jugglery." The poor savages regarded him with fear and respect — as a being who could at his will dispose of life. Many made him presents of horses and other objects, in order to escape figuring on the list of his fatal predictions.

The most influential and courageous personage of the Assiniboins, the principal obstacle to the ambition of Gaucher or Tchatka, was his own uncle. To a lofty stature, his uncle joined a bravery, a boldness, and a violence which no one dared oppose. He bore the name of Walking Bow,

corporal macerations; then they beat the drum, dance, sing, smoke, cry, and howl like wild beasts. All these preparatives are accompanied by a host of furious actions, and such extraordinary contortions of body, that they would seem possessed. These jugglers are visited secretly by night by accomplices in their craft and hypocrisy, who carry them all the news of the village and its neighborhood. By these means the jugglers, on leaving the forest and returning to the village, easily impose on the credulous. The first part of their predictions consists in giving an exact account of all the events of the village since their departure — marriages, deaths, returns from the war or the hunt, and all other remarkable items.—*Author's Note.*

or Itazipa-man. He was renowned for his valorous deeds in combat. His robe, his casque, his clothing, his tomahawk, lance, and even the bridle and saddle of his steed, were adorned with scalps and trophies taken from his enemies. He was surnamed The One-eyed, or Istagon, because he had lost an eye in battle by an arrow.

Tchatka was jealous of the power of Istagon, and of the influence the latter exercised over the whole tribe. Hitherto he had not attempted the life of his uncle; as he feared his anger, he desired to assure himself of his protection. He needed him as long as those were living who might oppose his ambitious march, the success of which was so little merited on his part; no deed of arms, no trophy gained from the enemy, could authorize him to carry his pretensions higher. By his arts and flattery, by an assiduous attention and feigned submission to the smallest desires of the chief, the cunning young man succeeded in gaining the friendship and confidence of his uncle. They saw each other more frequently; they gave each other feasts and banquets, in which the greatest harmony seemed to reign. One evening Tchatka presented his guest a poisoned dish: the latter, according to the Indian custom, ate the whole. Knowing, by experience, that in a few hours the ingredient would produce its effects, Tchatka invited all the principal braves and soldiers of the camp to repair to his lodge, announcing that he had an affair of the highest importance to communicate to them. He placed his Wah-kon in the most suitable and most conspicuous part of his lodge. This Wah-kon of Gaucher's consisted of a stone, painted red, and surrounded by a little fence of small sticks about six inches in length. It lay at a little distance from the fire, which was burning in the centre of the lodge, and opposite the place where he sat. It had occupied this place for several years.

As soon as the whole assembly were arranged, Tchatka disclosed his Wah-kon. He declared to them that the thunder, during a nocturnal storm, had launched this stone into the middle of his lodge; that the voice of the thunder had told him that it possessed the gift and the spirit of prophecy; that the Wah-kon stone had announced that a great event was about to take place in the camp; for that very night the most valiant brave of the tribe would struggle in the arms of death, and that another, more favored than he by the spirits, would take his place, and would be proclaimed head chief of the camp; that at the very moment the chief expired, the Wah-kon stone would vanish, and accompany the spirit of the deceased into the country of souls.

A mournful silence succeeded this singular declaration. Astonishment, mingled with superstitious dread, was depicted on the faces of all those who composed the assembly. No one dared to contradict the discourse of Tchatka, or call in doubt his words. Besides, on many other occasions his predictions had been realized at the appointed time. He whose death had been foretold, without being named, was present. As several occupied nearly as high a rank as himself in the camp, and shared the power in concert with Istagon, the latter did not at first apply to himself exclusively the announcement of death which had just been made so mysteriously. He did not yet feel the effects of the poisoned dish, and had not even the slightest suspicion on the subject. Each withdrew to his own lodge; but dark apprehensions troubled their minds, and agitation controlled their hearts. Who will be the victim announced?

Toward midnight a messenger informed Gaucher that his uncle and friend was very sick, and wished positively to speak with him. The uncle suspected the perfidy of his nephew, and was resolved to stretch him dead at his feet while he yet possessed sufficient strength. The wily Tchatka answered the messenger, "Go, tell Istagon that my visit to him would prove useless. I could not possibly at this moment quit my lodge and my Wah-kon."

In the mean time a great tumult and great confusion arose throughout the camp; consternation became general. In his horrible convulsions, and before they had deprived him of the use of speech, Istagon declared to the braves who first answered his call, that he suspected Tchatka of being the cause of his death. They at once uttered shrieks of rage and vengeance against the latter, and hastened to his lodge to execute their threats. Tchatka, apparently grieved and melancholy, on account of the unhappy lot of his uncle, and trembling with fear at the sight of so many uplifted tomahawks, besought these avengers of Istagon to suspend their wrath and deign to listen to him. "Relations and friends," said he, "Istagon is my uncle; the same blood flows in our veins; he has ever loaded me with marks of his friendship and his confidence. How then could I injure him? A few moments ago you saw him vigorous with health; now that he is grappling with death you come to discharge your vengeance upon me! What have I done to deserve it? I predicted the event! How could I help doing so? Such was the decree of my great Wah-kon! Approach, and observe it closely, for I announced at the same time that my Wah-kon would disappear, in order to accompany the soul of the chief into the region of spirits. If my word is accomplished, and my Wah-kon stone disappears, is it not an evident sign that the death of Istagon is rather a decree of the manitous than a treachery on my part? Wait, and judge for yourselves." These few words had the desired effect; they seated themselves as sentinels around the mysterious stone. Neither calumet nor dish was handed round in this mute circle — silent in appearance, but tumultuous in reality, for their hearts were agitated with different emotions, to which the discourse of the perfidious Tchatka had given rise.

During the two hours that this scene lasted, the fire gradually became dim, and shed only a few feeble glimmerings, which were from time to time reflected from these sombre and sinister faces. In the interval, some runners arrived, to announce the progress of the malady. "Istagon is in convulsions, and utters naught but shrieks of rage and despair against his nephew — his convulsions grow more feeble — he is losing his speech — he can only be heard with difficulty — he is in agony — Istagon is dead." Cries of distress accompanied this last message. At the same instant the mysterious stone burst into a thousand fragments, with a noise like thunder, which palsied all present with fear. In scattering, it filled the lodge with cinders and fire, and wounded severely the nearest of the observers. Stunned and frightened, all took flight from this scene of prodigies. The indignation and revenge which animated them a moment before against Tchatka, gave place to fear, mingled with awe and respect for him, and they no longer dared approach him. The supernatural power of the Wah-kon was acknowledged, and he who had received it from[7] the thunder was honored throughout the camp with the title of Wah-kon-Tangka, that is, Great Medicine.

This pretended supernatural affair is thus explained: The wily savage had been a long time preparing the part he intended performing. Some days beforehand he pierced the stone, and charged it with nearly a pound of powder. A train of powder, carefully covered over, conducted from the place in which he was seated to the hole excavated in the stone — a distance of six or eight feet. He seized a favorable instant for lighting a piece of tinder, and at the very moment that the death of the "One-eyed" was announced, he fired the train — the stone exploded.

All these subtle and perfidious means of Gaucher must appear very simple in the civilized world, where poison and powder are so often employed in all manner of crimes and misdemeanors; but among the Indians the case was widely different. They were then ignorant of the destructive power of these two articles. It is not therefore astonishing that they saw only Wah-kon — that is to say, the supernatural and incomprehensible — in all this.

At his death, Istagon left a great number of friends, especially among the warriors, who were sincerely attached to him on account of his bravery. Several among them,

[7] Fr. from it.

less credulous perhaps than the others, eyed Tchatka with stern and threatening looks every time that he appeared in public. But as he lived retired, rarely quitting his lodge, their disdain and aversion for him were not much remarked. Besides, as I have already observed, he had a numerous band of relatives; the members of his family, on whom he could rely, with his partisans, formed a fourth part of all the camps, or about eighty lodges.

Tchatka was well persuaded that a politic stroke was still necessary to gain the undecided, the discontented, and the incredulous. Circumstances seemed to favor this measure; he resolved to have recourse to it while the prodigy of the stone was still fresh in their memory. It has occasionally happened, too, that on the death of a chief, a numerous camp divides into different companies, above all if there had existed any anterior discord. Tchatka, therefore, shut himself in his lodge during several days, without communicating openly with any one. The camp expected something marvelous. The causes of this long retreat were discussed; they lost themselves in conjectures; all, however, were fully persuaded that some new manifestation, either good or evil, would be the result. On the fifth day of Tchatka's retreat, a general uneasiness was manifested among the savages, and they spoke of dividing.

What was the famous Tchatka, the Great Medicine—the hope of some, and the terror of others — doing? Nothing else than making a drum, or *tchant-cheega-kabo,* of dimensions that never any Indian had imagined. Some time beforehand, in the premeditation of his exploit, he had secretly sawed a piece of an enormous hollow tree, very suitable to his design. Its height three feet, and its breadth two, his drum resembled a churn. One end was covered with goat skin, and the other only with wood. He employed several days in cutting and scraping the interior of this famous instrument, in order to render it lighter. On the exterior of this *tchant-cheega-kabo,* he painted the figures of a grizzly bear, of a tortoise, of a buffalo bull — three superior genii in the catalogue of the Indian manitous. Between these figures were painted human heads, without scalps, filling every space, about eighty in number. On the skin of the drum, a chief of the Blackfeet tribe was represented, without a scalp, in black, and daubed with vermilion.

He had finished his work, and made all his preparations. At midnight the voice of Tchatka was heard, with the muffled sound of his *tchant-cheega,* which resounded through the camp. As though just coming forth from an ecstasy, he offered aloud his thankgivings and his invocations to the Great Spirit, and to all his favorite manitous, to thank them for the new favors with which they had just crowned him, the effects of which were to reflect upon the whole tribe. Without delay, every one listened to his call and repaired to his lodge. Observing the usual customs, the counselors, the principal among the braves and soldiers, entered first, and soon filled his abode; while hundreds of the curious, old and young, collected and besieged it without. Curiosity is at its highest pitch; they are on fire to learn the explanation of the mysterious news; they wait with anxious impatience.

As a preliminary, Tchatka intoned a beautiful war-song, without paying the slightest attention to the multitude which pressed around him. In his quality of medicine man, his head-dress was made of swan's-down; his face and his breast were painted in figures of different colors; his lips, dyed with vermilion, indicated that he thirsted for blood and breathed the spirit of war. When he perceived that the whole band was around him, he arose, and with the voice of a stentor, addressed the assembly.

"I dreamed," said he, "friends and warriors, I dreamed! During five days and five nights, I was admitted into the land of spirits; living, I walked among the dead. My eyes have witnessed frightful scenes; my ears have heard frightful moans, sighs, lamentations and howlings! Have you courage to listen to me? Can I suffer you to become the victims of your most cruel enemies? For, know that danger is near — the enemy is not far distant!"

An aged man, whose white hairs announced seventy winters, the grand counselor of the nation, and a juggler, replied:

"A man who loves his tribe conceals nothing from the people. When danger is at hand, he speaks; when the enemy is in sight, he goes out to meet him. You say you have visited the region of souls; I believe in your words. I also, in my dreams, have frequently conversed with the ghosts of the departed. Tchatka, though young, has given us extraordinary proofs of his power; the last hour of Istagon was terrible, but who dares rise to blame you? You only predicted the two events: the chief died, and the Wahkon disappeared. I also performed wonders in my youth. Now I am old; but although my limbs begin to be feeble, I have yet a clear mind. We will listen to your words with attention, and then we will decide on the course we ought to take. I have spoken."

The speech of the old man had a favorable effect on the whole assembly. Perhaps he was in Tchatka's secret. All the succeeding orations manifested a feeling of inclination to the murderer. The latter, reassured concerning the dispositions in regard to him, continued his recital with firmness and showed confidence respecting his future plans.

"Let those who have ears, hearken to me! those who have not, are free to go! You know me. I am a man of few words, but what I advance is true, and the events which I predict arrive. During five days and five nights my spirit was wafted amid the spirits of the dead, especially of our relatives and friends — of our friends whose bones are whitening on the plains, and which the wolves drag into their lairs — of our friends who, still unavenged, wander up and down, amid swamp and snow and ice, in sterile and forsaken deserts, which produce neither fruit, nor root, nor animal, to subsist on. It is a place of darkness, where sunlight never enters. They are subject to all privations — cold, hunger, thirst. We, their friends, their relatives, their brethren, are the cause of their long sufferings and fearful woes. Their sighs and moans were unsupportable. I trembled in every limb; my hair stood erect on my head; I believed my lot fixed with theirs; when a kindly spirit touched my hand and said: 'Tchatka, return to the place which thou hast left; return to thy body, for it is not yet time for thee to enter the land of spirits. Return, and thou shalt be the bearer of good news to thy nation — the shades of thy deceased relations shall be avenged, and their deliverance is nigh. In thy lodge thou wilt find a drum, painted with figures that soon thou shalt learn to know.' At this instant the spirit left me. Coming forth from my dream, I found my drum, painted as you now behold it. When my body was restored to animation, I found that I had not changed position. During four days and four nights I had the same vision, varied sometimes, but always accompanied with complaints and reproaches concerning our recent defeats by our enemies, the Blackfeet. The fifth night, the manitou addressed me anew, and said: 'Tchatka, henceforth the *tchant-cheega-kabo* shall be thy Wah-kon. Arise, follow without delay the war-path which leads to the Blackfeet. At the source of Milk river thirty lodges of the enemies are encamped. Set out instantly, and after five days' march thou shalt reach the camp. On the sixth thou shalt make a fearful carnage. Every head painted on the drum represents a scalp, and the taking of these scalps will appease the manes of thy deceased parents and friends. Then only will they be enabled to quit the frightful abode where thou beholdest them, to enter the beauteous plains where plenty reigns and where suffering and privation are unknown. At this moment a Blackfoot war-party is prowling around the camp. They sought a favorable moment, but not finding it, have gone in search of a weaker enemy. Set out, then, without delay; thou shalt find an easy victory; thou shalt find in the Blackfoot camp only old men, women and children.' Such were the words of the manitou, and he disappeared. I returned to my body. I recovered my senses. I have told you all."[8] Thus spoke this extraordinary man.

Before continuing the strange history of Tchatka and of his predictions, it will be necessary to explain that he gained over to his cause and person several active young men, the best runners in the camp. From them he obtained in secret all the news and information that they could gather in their long expeditions, either as to the hunt, or as to the proximity, number and position of the enemy. The juggler, as soon as he is informed, makes his medicine or incantations, and then prophecies to the people, who, not suspecting the trick, deem all supernatural that comes from the impostor's mouth.

Let us continue: the discourse of Tchatka (for we will so style him in our narrative, although he had now received that of Wah-kon-Tangka or Big Medicine) had produced the effect he desired on all his auditory. The Assiniboins entertained a mortal hatred against the Blackfeet; this detestation had been transmitted from father to son, and augmented by continual aggressions and reprisals. We may form an idea of the propensity that Indians have for war, from the expression which they use to designate it. They call it "The Breath of their Nostrils." Each family numbered some member slain by their dreadful adversary. Tchatka's words aroused in their hearts the most violent thirst of vengeance. The *sassaskwi*, or war-whoop, was the unanimous response of all the warriors in the camp. They lighted bonfires, formed groups for chanting invocations to their manitous, and executed the scalp-dance. Then each one examined his arms, and the whole scene changed into a vast workshop. The soldiers sharpened the double-edged knives and daggers, filed anew the lances and arrows, vermilioned the battle-axes and the tomahawks, bridled and saddled the horses; while the women mended and prepared the moccasins, the leggins and the sacks of provisions necessary for the journey. As though it were a grand gala occasion, every one daubed his face with vermilion according to his fancy, and arrayed himself in his handsomest ornaments. Never had so lively and so unanimous an enthusiasm appeared in the tribe. All relied implicitly on the promises of Tchatka, and counted on certain victory. The warriors felicitated themselves on having at last found an opportunity to efface the shame and opprobrium inflicted on the nation, and to avenge the death of their kindred. The camp breathed naught but war. The man who had set all in motion remained silent and alone. Tranquil in his lodge, beside his big drum, he would neither take part in the public rejoicings, nor join in the singing and dancing the war-dance.

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[8] Many of our Indian tribes celebrate, toward the close of winter, the "Feast of Dreams." The ceremonies are often prolonged to ten days or a fortnight. They might rather be termed Bacchanalia or Carnival. Even the Indians call it the "Feast of Madmen." These are days of great disorder;— when all they dream or pretend to dream must be executed. Dances, songs, and music form the principal ceremonies of the feast.—*Author's Note.*

When the war-party was formed and ready to depart, several old men and soldiers were deputed to Tchatka, to ask him to take the lead, and conduct the enterprise in person. He replied: "You have seen that the two events that I predicted have drawn upon me the ill will of a great number. I am young — I am no warrior — choose an older and more experienced man than I to lead the braves to battle. I will stay here; leave me to my dreams and my drum." The deputies reported his response to their comrades; but the latter insisted anew that Tchatka be of the company. A new deputation, composed this time of the nearest relatives of Istagon, sought Tchatka in the name of the whole camp, and announced to him that henceforward he should be their war-chief, and all promised him respect and obedience. After some hesitation, Tchatka surrendered to their entreaties, saying: "Friends and relations, I forget the wrongs that I have endured. If my predictions are accomplished — if we find the camp of the Blackfeet which I have designated — if we tear from the enemy as many scalps as are on my drum, will you in future believe in my great medicine? If I declare to you that on the second day after our departure we shall detect the trail of the war-party that has passed near our camp — if we slay on the battle-field the great chief of the Blackfeet, and you see him as he is painted on my drum, without a scalp and without hands;— if all this be accomplished literally, will you in future respond to my call?" They all accepted his conditions.

Immediately Tchatka arose, intoned his war-song to the sound of his drum and to the acclamations of the whole tribe. He then joined his band, but without arms, not even a knife. He ordered them to fasten his drum on the back of a good horse, which he had led beside him by one of his faithful spies and runners, by the bridle.

In order to understand better the issue, it may not be irrelevant to say a few words on the Indian chiefs. Each nation is divided into different bands or tribes, and each tribe counts several villages. Every village has its chief, to whom they submit in proportion to the respect or terror which his personal qualities inspire. The power of a chief is sometimes merely nominal; sometimes, also, his authority is absolute, and his name, as well as his influence, extends beyond the limits of his own village, so that the whole tribe to which he belongs acknowledge him as their head. This was the case among the Assiniboins in the time of Tchatka. Courage, address and an enterprising spirit may elevate every warrior to the highest honors, especially if his father or an uncle enjoyed the dignity of chief before him, and he has a numerous family ready to maintain his authority and avenge his quarrels. Yet when the seniors and warriors have installed him with all the requisite ceremonies, it must not be supposed that he, on this account, arrogates to himself the least exterior appearance of rank or dignity. He is too well aware that his rank hangs by a frail thread, which may quite easily be broken. He must gain the confidence of his uncertain subjects, or retain them by fear. A great many families in the village are better off than the chief;—dress better, are richer in arms, horses and other possessions. Like the ancient German chiefs, he gains the confidence and attachment of his soldiers, first by his bravery, more frequently by presents, which only serve to impoverish him the more. If a chief does not succeed in gaining the love of his subjects, they will despise his authority and quit him at the slightest opposition on his part; for the customs of the Indians admit no conditions by which they may enforce respect from their subjects.

It rarely happens, among the Western tribes, that a chief attains great power, unless he is at the head of a numerous family. I have sometimes seen whole villages composed of the descendants and relatives of the chief. This kind of nomadic community has a certain patriarchal character, and is generally the best regulated and the most pacific. The chief is less a master than a father, who reigns in a numerous household by the wish to do all in his power to render all happy. It may be said in general of the Indian nations, that tribes little united with each other, rent even by discord and jealousy, can possess little power and exercise it less.

Let us return to Tchatka, the grand chief-elect of the principal band of the Assiniboins. He found himself in command of 400 warriors. They marched the rest of the night and during the whole of the next day, with the greatest precautions and in the best order, so as to prevent any surprise. Some scouts alone ran over and beat the surrounding country, leaving in their passage signals and rods planted in the earth, and inclined in such a manner as to indicate the route that the little army ought to follow. About evening they descried a thick wood on the border of a little stream, and there erected, hastily, a kind of parapet, or defense, with the dried branches and trunks of trees, and thus passed behind it a peaceful night. In the morning they found themselves in the midst of an innumerable herd of bisons, and stopped some instants to renew their stock of provisions.[9] Toward nightfall a faithful scout returned and communicated secretly with Tchatka. After marching several miles farther, the chief, with the beating of his drum Wah-kon, collected all his warriors, and pointing with his finger to a high hill some miles distant, he informed them that there they would trace the war-party of the Blackfeet, of which he had dreamed before leaving the camp. Several horsemen set out without delay to reconnoitre the enemy. At the spot indicated they found the path tracked by nearly a hundred horses. All the warriors redoubled their zeal, ardor and confidence in their new chief. The two succeeding days offered nothing very singular. They again stopped in the evening of the fifth day, without discovering the smallest vestige of proximity to the hostile camp they sought. The watchful scouts were gone, during the day, in different directions, without bringing back the least news, except the one who had been in secret communication with Tchatka. Several of the most ancient of the warriors murmured boldly, saying, " that the day predicted by the chief, on which they would surely see the enemy, had passed."

But Tchatka silenced them all, replying to them: " You seem still to doubt my words — the time is not past! Rather say, the time is arrived. You appear still young in experience — and yet a great many winters are beginning to whiten your heads. Where do you think you will find the lodges of your enemies? Is it in the open plain, or on the summit of an elevation? With a single glance of the eye we perceive all that is there, and is it there you pretend to discover them; and that, too, in a moment in which those who should protect their wives and children are afar? The bear and the jaguar hide their little ones in their dens, or in the depth of impenetrable forests; the wolf hides them in a hole; the goat and the deer cover them with hay. When you hunt the deer, do you not peep through the trees and the briars? In the fox and badger hunt, you seek their lairs. Let some one go and examine the little point of forest near the large rock, at the end of the plain in which we are."

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[9] I have often spoken of the bisons, improperly called buffaloes, without mentioning the great use which the Indians make of this interesting animal. They supply almost all the necessaries of life. Their skins form lodges or dwellings, and serve as clothing, litters, bridles, and saddle coverings, vessels to hold water, boats to cross lakes and rivers; with the hair, the Indians make their cordage; with the sinews, bowstrings and thread for clothes, as well as glue; the shoulder-blade is spade and pickaxe. The bison is their daily bread, their chief food. The dung of the animal, called *bois-de-vache*, furnishes abundant fuel. Last year 100,000 buffalo skins were sent from the desert to the warehouses of St. Louis. With the proceeds the Indians obtain arms and all they need—*Author's Note.*

Instantly, several of the most courageous and the most experienced in the stratagems of warfare were sent to the discovery. Favored by the night, and with all possible precautions, they entered the little wood, and made all their observations without being perceived. In the silence of midnight, they reported their news to Tchatka and his companions —"that they discovered the Blackfoot encampment in the place indicated by the chief; that the lodges were occupied solely by old men, women and children; that they could not hear the voices of any youth; and that all the horses were gone." This account filled these barbarous hearts with joy. The rest of the night was passed in songs and dances to the sound of the great drum, in juggleries and invocations to the manitous who had inspired Tchatka during his five days and five nights of dreams, and which had conducted his spirit into the regions of souls.

At the break of day the 400 Assiniboin warriors surrounded the thirty feeble wigwams of the Blackfeet. The cry of war and of vengeance, which they shouted simultaneously, like so many bloodthirsty furies, awakened and filled with dreadful fear those unhappy mothers and children left unprotected there. In accordance with their expectations, the Assiniboins found few men in the camp; all had gone with the war-party of which I have made mention. The small number of Blackfoot youth defended themselves with desperate bravery; but they could not long resist so many enemies. The combat was short; the carnage bloody and hideous. Old men, women and children fell an easy prey to the cruel Assiniboins. Only two young Blackfeet escaped this shocking butchery. An Assiniboin who participated in the combat gave the recital of it to Mr. Denig, and declared that with his own hand he had killed fourteen children and three women. Mr. Denig asked him if he had killed them all with arrows. "Some of them," answered he; "but failing in arrows, I had recourse to the tomahawk and the dagger." He added, at the same time, that they tore from the arms of their mothers and took with them a great number of little children, and that on their way, amid their songs and the scalp-dances, they amused themselves with flaying them alive and running pointed sticks through their bodies, in order to roast them alive before the fire. The piercing shrieks of these little creatures fell upon the ear of these barbarians, amid their inhuman orgies, like the sweetest and most delightful melody. All that a pitiless and savage heart could invent of torture was put in practice on this occasion. The Assiniboins declare that they satiated themselves with cruelty, to satisfy the manes of their deceased parents and kindred, and their implacable and long-wished-for vengeance against the greatest of their enemies, the Blackfeet. The number of scalps taken surpassed greatly the number of heads painted on the drum.

When returning to their own grounds, at the first encampment which they made, one of the warriors remarked, and loud enough for Tchatka's ear, "that the Blackfoot chief had neither been seen nor slain." The chief replied: "Our work is not yet finished; we will therefore have another encounter before repairing to our homes. The Blackfoot chief shall die! I saw him scalped in my dream: such he was painted on the drum by the manitous. His scalp shall be taken from him with his own knife."

A gentle shower fell during the night; a heavy fog obscured the sky during the morning, which obliged the whole company of warriors to remain together, in order not to lose their way. After some hours' march, the sound of a gun discharged in front of the line informed those who brought up the rear that an attack had commenced. Every one pressed forward to join the combatants. It was a rencontre with a troop of twenty or thirty Blackfeet that the fog had separated from their companions. Notwithstanding all the manœuvres of Tchatka to shelter himself from danger, he found himself enveloped in the midst of the fight, ignorant which way to turn. The Blackfeet defended themselves courageously, but they were forced to yield to the superior number of adversaries. Several escaped by means of the fog, which covered them from view.

In the heat of the engagement, Tchatka's horse was killed under him; the horseman and his steed rolled in the dust. At the same instant a Blackfoot, of lofty stature and prodigious strength, hurled his lance at him, which only grazed the head of his enemy, and struck deep, quivering in the earth. Then he attacked him, knife in hand. Tchatka rose rapidly from his fall, and, coward as he was, in self-defense he displayed skill and strength. He seized the arm of his terrible adversary, and used every effort to wrest the knife. As the combat in front of the line had ceased, the Assiniboins, perceiving the absence of their chief, returned to look for him. They found him prostrate, and still combating with his powerful enemy. The Blackfoot, now disengaged, raised his arm to plunge his knife into the heart of Tchatka, when he received the blow of a tomahawk on his skull, which stretched him without consciousness beside his vanquished adversary. The latter, in his turn, seized the murderous instrument and finished the Blackfoot. On rising he shouted: "Friends, behold the chief of the Blackfeet, for his medal reveals and proclaims him! I hold in my hand the knife of Mâttan Zia (Bear's Foot), whose mighty deeds you know, and who has been, during many years, the terror of our nation." With the same blood-stained knife he scalped him and cut off his two hands, in order to accomplish the last point of his great prophecy, which will be repeated from father to son among the Assiniboins, to the last generation. On this occasion Tchatka received the third name, Minàyougha, or Knifeholder.

The whole tribe gave themselves up to a delirium of joy, which I could not describe, when the expedition returned with so many trophies gained from their most cruel enemies. The dances and incantations to the sound of the mysterious drum, and the public rejoicing which commonly accompany the scalps, were renewed a hundred times during the space of a single moon. The glory of Tchatka and his manitous was chanted in the whole camp. They announced him, with the highest acclamations, the Minàyougha and the Wah-kon-Tangka *par excellence,* whom none could resist. He lost none of the advantages which he had gained in public opinion by his profound and cruel stratagem. The whole command of the tribe was intrusted to him, and never chief among the Assiniboins attracted so much respect and fear.

Like a true bashaw, or modern Mormon, he selected three wives at once, without even consulting them. Two of these had been already betrothed to two young and very influential warriors. Notwithstanding their protest, the parents believed themselves honored in being allied to the family of the great chief, by the choice which he made of their daughters, and they were conducted to the lodge of Tchtaka. To maintain peace in his new household, and put the discontented in good humor, by destroying every hope, he gave orders to one of his partisans to poison, in secret, his two competitors. The better to shield himself from all suspicion, he set off in the chase. On his return, they gave him the news of their death. He contented himself by saying "that those who were capable of contradicting him in the smallest trifles, or who presumed to despise his power, were in imminent danger of death."

In this manner the principal accomplice associated with Tchatka, for executing his numerous poisonings, fulfilled his mandates. We shall say a word concerning the relations in which these two detestable men stood. The hidden abettor was a near relative of the chief. He was about five feet in height, and of a robust and vigorous frame. He had lost an eye in a quarrel with a young man; over the other hung a great flap of flesh, beginning from the middle of his forehead, and extending as far as his under jaw. He had a flat nose, thick lips, a large, gaping mouth, which displayed two rows of oval teeth, as white as ivory. He concealed lightly his ugly frontispiece under tufts of thick, filthy black hair, matted together with gum and resin, mingled with vermilion. For several years, when he visited Fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellowstone, he was the terror of all the children, for it was impossible to meet a human face more frightful and more loathsome. Undoubtedly the marks of contempt that he everywhere received, on account of his exterior, excited in him the inveterate hatred that he bore to his race. The artful Tchatka, perceiving some advantages that he might draw from a man of this nature in the execution of his designs, had long before taken him as associate. He always treated him with kindness, made him presents, sought his confidence on various occasions and flattered his vicious inclinations. He could, in consequence, always rely upon this man, when there was occasion to injure his equals, and the poison had been administered so adroitly to the two young warriors that neither he nor Tchatka were suspected. On the contrary, in the opinion of the whole tribe, a new gem had been added to the brilliant reputation of Wah-kon-Tangka, who could, when distant or near, control the lives of his subjects.

During the first years that Tchatka found himself at the head of his tribe, success very generally crowned all his undertakings, and his renown passed into all the neighboring tribes. However, it sometimes happened that his warriors were beaten. On such occasions he was always the first to take flight, giving for excuse to his comrades that his great medicine (his drum) carried him away in spite of himself. It was most prudent to credit his word, for should any one be so rash as to doubt, he would be scarcely sure of escaping the sudden and mysterious death which seemed promptly to attack all his enemies in his own camp.

In 1830, after having predicted success, he experienced his first great defeat, on the part of the Blackfeet, leaving on the plain beyond sixty warriors slain and nearly an equal number wounded. From this moment dates the commencement of his fall; the prestige which hitherto surrounded his name and his deeds began to fail. About this time the fur company had just provisioned Fort Union at the place where it stands to-day. It had been supplied with two years' stock of goods for trade with the nations of the Upper Missouri.

In hopes of repairing, in some manner, the great loss that he had just undergone, to arouse the dejected courage of his soldiers, to "cover the dead"—that is to say, to put an end to the mourning in the families which had lost near kindred in the last battle, Tchatka promised them boldly "that he would render them all rich, and would load them with an abundance of spoils, so that all the horses of the tribe would not be able to carry them. He had been favored with a new dream—a dream which will not deceive them, provided they enter into his designs, and that they be faithful in the execution of his orders." He had formed the project of seizing Fort Union, with a band of 200 select warriors. Tchatka presented himself there. He affected a singular friendship for the whites. He attempted to make the superintendent, Mr. M [cKenzie], believe that he was *en route*, with his band, for the country of the Minnetarees [or Gros-ventres] of [the] Missouri, their enemies; that they had need of some munitions of war; and that they intended continuing on their way at daybreak. Hospitality was kindly accorded to them. The chief played his part so well, that the ordinary precaution of disarming guests, and putting their weapons under lock and key, was neglected on this occasion. The plan that Tchatka had developed to his warriors was to retire to the different chambers of the fort, and to massacre, during their sleep, at a given signal, all those who occupied them. By a happy incident, some days previous to this enterprise, all the Canadian employees at the fort, to the number of about eighty, had come to Fort Union for goods to trade with the Crows and the Blackfeet. Notwithstanding this strong reinforcement, the savages might have succeeded in their design had not a still more favorable happening brought their project to light. An Assiniboin had a sister married to one of the merchants from the North. Desirous of saving the life of his sister, and of sheltering her in the *mêlée* which was to take place, he communicated to her, under the strictest secrecy, the intentions of the chief, inviting her to come and pass the night in his room, that he might the better protect her. The woman promised to follow him; but went immediately to warn her husband against the danger which menaced him as well as all the whites at the fort. The husband announced the plot to the superintendent and to all the gentlemen in charge.

The employees, one after the other, were called, without arousing the least suspicion. They quitted their apartments quietly, were armed in the twinkling of an eye, took possession of the two bastions and of all the important points of the fort. When all the precautions were taken, Tchatka and the principal braves of his band were invited to repair to the parlor of the commandant, who openly reproached them with their black treachery. Giving no heed to their protestations, he gave them their choice, either to quit the fort without blows, or to be chased from it by the big guns (cannon), which were leveled at them. Tchatka accepted the former without hesitation, and instantly withdrew, confused and vexed at having lost so fine an opportunity of enriching himself and his tribe, at having failed in his promise and in the accomplishment of his pretended dream.

Tchatka had exhausted all his medicine sack, or provision of poisons. His former northern friends had refused to furnish him any more. He was absolutely determined on procuring some, for poison was his only means of getting rid of those who opposed his ambition or contradicted him in his plans. He performed his diabolical deeds with such skill and secrecy, that the Indians were firmly persuaded that their chief had only to will it, and they would die. Hence their abject submission to his every and least caprice. This people, formerly free as air, was reduced, during a succession of years, to the condition of slaves to the most cowardly and pitiless tyrant.

In the course of the year 1836 Tchatka presented himself again at Fort Union, at the head of a band of hunters. They went there to sell their peltry— viz., buffalo-robes, beaver skins, and the fur of badgers, foxes, bears, deer, goats and bighorn; in a word, the fruits of their hunting excursions, in exchange for tobacco, ornaments, blankets, guns, ammunition, knives, daggers and lances. A large portion of the peltry belonged to Tchatka. He offered them to a merchant for a very small quantity of tobacco, telling him, secretly, "that he was in absolute want of poison, whatever it might cost," and begging him to procure a large amount; "without which, the charm which surrounded him among his people would abandon him hopelessly." His proposition was heard with great horror. He only received in reply severe representations on the baseness of his conduct and on his infamous and frightful proceedings. But these were ineffectual on his perverted heart, hardened by an astonishing succession of unheard-of crimes and atrocities. He left the fort with evident tokens of discontent at having been frustrated in his attempt.

During the two years which succeeded, Tchatka conducted several war-parties, sometimes with success and sometimes with reverses. It was perceptible that his years were advancing; that his manitous were less faithful than formerly; that his predictions were no longer realized; that those who criticised his arrangements lived notwithstanding. Several even dared to defy his power.

In the spring of 1838 [1837], the smallpox (it was not well known how) was communicated to the Indian tribes in [on the] Upper Missouri. The ravages of this disease entirely changed the position which Tchatka had hitherto held among the Indians. The fine camp of Tchatka, composed of 1,200 warriors, was reduced, in this single season, to eighty men capable of bearing arms. Other tribes experienced trials still more severe. This scourge counted more than 10,000 victims among the Crows and the Blackfeet; the Minnetarees were reduced from 1,000 to 500; the Mandans, the noblest among the races in the upper Missouri, counting 600 warriors before the epidemic, were reduced to thirty-two, others say to nineteen only! A great number committed suicide, in despair; some with their lances and other warlike instruments, but the greater part by throwing themselves from a high rock which overlooks the Missouri.

In the course of the following year, Tchatka formed the design of seizing, by stratagem, the large village of the Mandans,[10] and of taking all the horses and effects which they could find in it.

The village of the Mandans was then permanent, and in the neighborhood of the present site of Fort Clark. About five miles lower dwelt the Aricaras, new allies and friends of the Mandans, who numbered about 500 warriors and had escaped the contagion, because they were absent in the hunting grounds when the scourge broke out. The Aricaras belonged in ancient times to the Pawnee nation, on the Nebraska or Platte river.

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[10] I have mentioned the Mandans, and some of their traditions, in several of my letters. Their Indian name is See-pohs-ka-nu-ma-ka-kee, which signifies a partridge. They have a remarkable tradition concerning the deluge. On a high hill existing in their territory, they say that the big canoe (the ark) rested. Every year, when the willow buds, they celebrate this event by grand festivals and noisy ceremonies. Their tradition says that the branch brought back to the great canoe by the bird was a willow branch, full of leaves. The bird they allude to was the dove, and it is forbidden, in their religious code, to kill it.—*Author's Note.*— [See Catlin, vol. I, p. 158.]

Tchatka was ignorant of the circumstances of the position of the Aricaras, in respect to the Mandans, and had scarcely given a thought to the proximity of the two tribes. Having collected the sad remnant of his warriors, he communicated to them the design he had formed. "We will go," said he, "to offer the calumet of peace to the Mandans. They will accept it with joy," added he, "for they are feeble, and have the hope of finding in us a protection against the Sioux, their most furious enemies. As soon as we are admitted in the village, under these appearances of friendship, we will scatter ourselves here and there throughout their lodges, then, by a simultaneous movement, we will fall, with cutlass and dagger, on all that remain of the Mandans. They cannot escape us. All that they possess will belong to us." The plan appeared practicable to them. Desiring to do something which might ameliorate their condition, the Assiniboins accepted heartily the proposition of their chief.

The secret of this expedition was confided to no one. They passed by Fort Union, so as to procure powder, as well as the balls necessary, and a few pounds of tobacco, "wherewith to smoke peace." Arrived in sight of the village, they stopped and made signals of friendship to the Mandans, requesting them to come and join them. Tchatka placed himself on a high hill, and beating his drum, he chanted his invocations to his manitous. He deputed twelve men of his tribe, bearing a little flag and the calumet of peace, with orders to smoke it when half way between him and the village. Through good fortune for the Mandans, some Aricaras, friends and allies, when returning from the chase, had stopped among them. Of all the nations of the upper Missouri, the Aricaras are considered the most deceitful and treacherous. Tchatka, without suspecting it, found himself taken in his own nets. He came to overthrow the little Mandan tribe, and then return laden with booty and with scalps. He fell into the snare which he had spread for others, and found himself at the mercy of worthy competitors.

After the Assiniboin deputies had smoked the calumet with the Mandans, the Aricaras set forth with all haste to go and announce to their chiefs this sudden and unforeseen reconciliation. The occasion was very favorable. Immediately the war-whoop resounded throughout the camp of the Aricaras. A few moments sufficed to saddle their horses and arm themselves. They had evidently a great advantage over their adversaries. Hidden by a headland of the forest, in the low valley, or bottom of the Missouri, they filed silently, and without being perceived, toward the village of the Mandans.

The ceremony of smoking the calumet of peace is ordinarily prolonged during several hours. First takes place a friendly interchange of news, a conversation in which each party boasts his lofty deeds, or the exploits [coups] he has achieved over his enemies, an exposition which is intended to excite the admiration of the opposite party. They then pass to speeches, in which the points in question are to be discussed. If the calumet is accepted, and passes from mouth to mouth, the resolutions are ratified and peace is concluded.

They were at this point, and were disposing themselves to enter the village together, when suddenly the Aricaras presented themselves and shouted their war-cry. At the first discharge of guns and arrows, the twelve Assiniboin deputies lost their lives. Their scalps were at once taken off and their bodies horribly mutilated. It was the affair of a moment. About 300 Aricaras, shouting cries of victory, mingled with imprecations, directed their steps toward the hill, in order to continue the massacre of the Assiniboins. At the first signal of attack, Tchatka sprang to his horse and fled. The greater part of the Assiniboins, being on foot, were easily overtaken by their enemies on horseback, and soon fell under the blows of the latter. Several among them, however, defended themselves like braves. Notwithstanding their great inferiority in number, they killed three Aricaras; and, although wounded, were so happy as to gain the forest, and escape the slaughter.

After the battle, the corpses of fifty-three Assiniboins remained stretched on the plain, a prey for vultures and wolves. But where is their leader, the great chief of the Assiniboins? Where was he during the fight? This famous Tchatka, this Wah-kon-Tangka, this Minàyougha, this hero of the great drum, had been the first to fly on his fleet horse. But the Aricaras had fresher animals, and pressed on in hot pursuit. As they gained on him they fired repeatedly, and at last killed his horse beneath him. Tchatka rose instantly. The forest is before him; if he can reach it, there is yet a shadow of hope. He spares no effort; fear lends him wings; old as he is, he takes the start and gains the goal before his most impetuous enemies in the pursuit can reach him. Some of his own soldiers, witnesses of this famous running match, conferred on him the name of Ta-to-kah-nan, or the wild goat,[11] the fleetest animal of our plains.

Tchatka rejoined his soldiers in the forest. Thirty only had escaped the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the Aricaras; the greater number were wounded, and some of them mortally. They were the feeble remains, the last men of a band of 1,200 warriors. Tchatka hung his head, and hardly dared to look at them. All his nation had disappeared. Two of his sons had fallen in this last combat. His *tchant-cheega-kabo,* or great drum, was in the hands of his enemies; his favorite horse killed. He had no longer a band, upon whom he could exert his influence, and accomplish his execrable intentions of poisoning.

After this defeat, the band of Tchatka having become too reduced to form a camp, was united to the "Gens du nord," or Northern People, as they termed them; that is, to another great branch of the Assiniboins. From that time Tchatka no longer mingled with public affairs. However, he always continued to pass for a great medicine man, and was sometimes consulted, particularly on great and dangerous occasions. He never ceased, until his death, to inspire all who approached him with a certain respect, mingled with fear and terror.

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[11] Fr. Cabri; antelope.

"As we live, so we die," says the proverb. The end of this wicked chief was not less remarkable than his whole life. What follows I have from an eye-witness. I cite the authority of Mr. Denig, an intimate friend and a man of high probity, from whom I have received all the information that I have offered you concerning the Assiniboins, and who resided among them during twenty-two years.

In the autumn of 1843, the "Northern People" repaired to Fort Union to make exchanges in trade with their peltry. The first who presented himself at the entrance of the fort, to shake hands with Mr. Denig, was old Tchatka. "Brother," said he laughing, "I came to the fort to die among the whites!" Mr. Denig attaching no importance to these words, the aged man repeated them to him anew. "Did you understand what I said? This is my last visit to the fort. I shall die here!" Mr. Denig then inquired concerning the health of Tchatka — whether he felt ill. He spoke of it to other Indians, but all assured him that Tchatka was in good health as usual; they added, however, that before quitting the village he had predicted to them "that his last hour was approaching, and that before the next sunset his spirit would be in the region of souls." The gentlemen of the fort, informed of this news, ordered Tchatka to be called, and questioned him concerning his strange declaration. They also feared some artifice on his part, and recalled the tricks, deceits and cruelties that he had practiced on his tribe, as well as his black treason and his odious plots against the occupants of the fort in 1831. He declared positively to these gentlemen that he was quite well; that he experienced no kind of indisposition. He added: "I repeat to you, my hour is come — my manitous call me — I have seen them in my dream — I must depart! Yes, to-morrow my spirit will take flight into the land of ghosts!" In the evening he took a good supper, and slept peacefully after, while the other Indians amused themselves during the whole night. On the morrow, Tchatka presented himself once more at the office of Mr. Denig, and had a slight spitting of blood. They tried to make him take some remedy, but he refused, saying: "All is useless — henceforth life is insupportable to me — I will and I must die — I have told you so." A little time after, he left the fort with the other Indians, and went to the margin of the river. He soon had a second attack, more violent than the first. They placed him on a sleigh, intending to transport him to the Indian camp, but he died on the way, in the most terrible convulsions. It was, according to all appearances, the same "grand medicine" which he had administered on a great number of occasions to his unfortunate victims, during his sad and long administration as chief, that at last terminated his own career.

The lifeless body of this too famous chief was carried in great ceremony into the Indian village, twenty-two miles distant from the fort. The whole tribe assisted at his obsequies. The corpse, after being painted, ornamented with their richest decorations, and wrapped in a scarlet-colored blanket and a beautiful buffalo-robe embroidered with porcupine[13] quills, was at last elevated and fastened between two branches of a large tree, amid the tears, cries and lamentations of the multitude.

Such was the ascendency that his name and deeds exerted over the minds of the whole Assiniboin tribe, that the place where his mortal remains repose is at the present day an object of the highest veneration. The Assiniboins never pronounce the name of Tchatka but with respect. They believe that his shade guards the sacred tree; that he has power to procure them abundance of buffalo and other animals, or to drive the animals from the country. Hence, whenever they pass, they offer sacrifices and oblations; they present the calumet to the tutelary spirits and manes of Tchatka. He is, according to their calendar, the Wah-kon-Tangka *par excellence,* the greatest man or genius that ever visited their nation.

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[13] *En porc-epic* is the term of the *voyageurs*. The long quills of the animal resemble those of a bird, and are stripped off by the women in threads, for embroidering.—*Author's Note.*

The Assiniboins never bury their dead. They bind the bodies with thongs of rawhide between the branches of large trees, and more frequently place them on scaffolds, to protect them from the wolves and other wild animals. They are higher than a man can reach. The feet are always turned to the west. There they are left to decay. When the scaffolds or the trees to which the dead are attached fall, through old age, the relatives bury all the other bones, and place the skulls in a circle in the plain, with the faces turned toward the centre. They preserve these with care, and consider them objects of religious veneration. You will generally find there several bison skulls. In the centre stands the medicine pole, about twenty feet high, to which Wah-kons are hung, to guard and protect the sacred deposit. The Indians call the cemetery the *village of the dead.* They visit it at certain seasons of the year, to converse affectionately with their deceased relatives and friends, and always leave some present.

The Assiniboins give their name to the Assiniboin River, the great tributary of the Red River of the North, in the English Hudson Bay Company's territory. The word Assiniboin signifies *stone-cooking people.* This tribe had, in former times, for want of better utensils, the custom of boiling their meat in holes dug in the ground and lined with raw skins. The water and the meat were put together in these holes; then large red-hot stones were cast in until the meat was boiled. This custom is now almost obsolete, since they get pots from the whites. The original mode is used, however, on great occasions or medicine-feasts. The

Assiniboin language is a dialect of the Dacotah or Sioux. They separated from this great nation for a trifle — a quarrel between two women, wives of the great chiefs. A buffalo had been found by these two women; each of them persisted in having the whole heart of the animal; from words they came to fisticuffs; and in their rage they used their nails and teeth. The two great chiefs had the folly to take part with their better-halves in the quarrel, and separated in lasting discontent. From that epoch the two tribes have been at war.

In this last short recital, I furnish your poets with materials for a new Iliad. The two great chiefs possessed, without doubt, names more sonorous than those of Achilles and Agamemnon. I leave you to continue the similitude.

CHAPTER XI.

LOUISE SIGHOUIN, AN INDIAN WOMAN OF THE CŒUR D'ALÈNE TRIBE.

Sighouin's baptism — Devotes herself to the service of the missionaries — Combats the medicine men — Diabolical superstitions — A model wife and mother — The communion garment — Charity to the sick — Tale of an orphan — Devotion to the cross — Fear of spectres — Rebukes depravity — Death and burial — Mourning of the tribe — Testimony of her husband.

Childhood and Baptism.

LOUISE SIGHOUIN of the tribe of Skizoumish [Skitsuish] or Cœur d'Alènes, daughter of the chief of the tribe, was endowed with the noblest qualities of mind and heart, which won her the esteem and respect not only of all her nation, but also of the neighboring tribes and of all whites who had an opportunity of knowing her. A poor and humble child, but rich in virtue and exalted in grace, Louise flowered in the desert like a lily amid thorns. She was an oasis amid a sterile waste; she was a light amid the shades of death. Like the poor woman in the gospel, she had sought and found the lost treasure, and she carefully preserved it all the days of her life to her latest breath.

Before her baptism, even, she was remarkable for her rare modesty and reserve, great gentleness, and a solid judgment. Her words were everywhere listened to with admiration and pleasure, and her company sought in all families.

In October, 1841, a new era was preparing for her. In the course of the missions which I was then giving in the upper parts of the Rocky Mountains, I met for the first time three families of Cœur d'Alènes, returning from the bison hunt on the plains of the upper Missouri. They joined my little band, and we traveled together. I found them mild, affable, polite in disposition, and above all very eager for the word of God. For several consecutive days I conversed with them on different points of faith and on the Church. After an instruction on the importance and necessity of baptism, they earnestly implored me to grant that favor to three of their little children. They were the first fruits of this tribe. When these families parted with us, all testified the most lively gratitude for what they had heard and learned with happiness: they assured me that the whole tribe would willingly accept the beautiful word of the Great Spirit, which I had announced to them, and they gave me a most pressing invitation to visit them at the earliest moment in order to instruct them.

Six months after, in April, 1842, I proceeded to their quarters. My good Cœur d'Alènes, who had been my traveling companions, had admirably prepared the way for my visit, and infused into all their countrymen an eager desire to hear the good tidings of the gospel. In consequence of the account which they gave, the chiefs had already hastened to depute to St. Mary's Mission several young men, selected from the most intelligent, in order to ask for missionaries to instruct them in the holy truths of religion.

The tidings of my coming soon spread through all the country. The Indians were to be seen flocking from all sides, through forest and plain, by the rivers and the great lake, to meet me and hear the law of God from the very lips of a Black-robe. My visit, consequently, had the most beneficial results. I baptized all the little children in the tribe and a good number of adults, who had hastened with holy avidity to come and receive the mustard seed mentioned in the gospel.

Among these was good Louise Sighouin. Enlightened by a special grace, and wishing to turn to the glory of God and the good of souls the rank which she occupied and the universal esteem she had acquired in the whole tribe, she used all her influence to induce a great number of families to follow her to the rendezvous, which was the great Lake Cœur d'Alène, in order to hear there the good and consoling word of the gospel. From the very first she showed the greatest avidity for it; at all times was she most assiduous at the instructions of the missionary. Aided by his advice and counsels, she was seen advancing with a sure and rapid step, zealously and fervently in the path that was later to lead her to Christian perfection. Regenerated in the holy waters of baptism, where she received the name of Louise, she seemed to have reached the summit of her desires, and to think only of wearing unsullied the white robe which she had received, of keeping well trimmed on earth the flaming light that she had held in her hands, and of which from that moment she had seemed to realize and comprehend the sublime significance; in fine, of showing herself faithful and grateful to God for the great favors which he had deigned to grant to her.

Soon after this she resolved to devote herself entirely to the service of the missionaries who had come to labor in the territory of the Cœur d'Alènes. With this view she generously renounced her native spot, the guidance of her father, the society of her relatives and acquaintances, to be with the missionaries at the first, and then at the second mission station established in those countries. "I will follow the Black-robes," she often said, "to the end of the world, for fear that death should surprise and strike me far from them, and thus deprive me of the help of the holy sacraments and the salutary counsels of the Fathers. I wish to profit by their presence and their instructions to learn to know the Great Spirit well, to serve him faithfully, and to love him with all my heart."

This desire, or rather this ardent thirst to hear the word of Eternal Life, never for a moment diminished in Louise. Sooner than be wanting to the fidelity of her promises and her pious resolutions, she subjected herself, with unlimited confidence in God and with a holy ardor, to the severest trials and greatest sacrifices. From the time of her conversion, during the whole residue of her life, she lived by choice and predilection in great poverty and in privations of every kind, never seeking to diminish them by the assistance of others, and without ever letting the slightest murmur escape her. As St. Paul lays it down, she seemed to profess " to know only Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

The zeal and fervor in the service of God, which she manifested immediately after her baptism, were the unfailing tokens of a predestined soul, filled with extraordinary gifts from heaven. These privileged favors were manifested in all their light by her admirable gentleness, which the greatest opposition could not disturb, by her patience under every trial, by her truly angelic modesty, by her fervent and sustained piety. She seemed, as it were, absorbed in prayer, and nothing apparently could then distract her thoughts. Such was her avidity, her holy ardor, to hear the word of God, that every time a new religious truth broke in its effulgence on her mind, a visible joy overspread her countenance and her whole person: to her it was the precious discovery of a hidden treasure, a living fountain to quench her thirst of heavenly truths, a bread of life giving her new vigor. Each time she sought to share her happiness, this bread, this fountain, this treasure, with all who were like her hungering for the divine word.

An ardent and an untiring zeal for the salvation of souls seemed ever to occupy her thoughts. She employed all her leisure moments in the conversion and instruction of numerous pagans in her village. Neither the opposition which she encountered, nor the obstacles which she met, nor the insults which she received, nor the dangers to which she exposed herself, naught could divert her from the holy work which she had resolved to accomplish. Thus each day was marked by some new triumph, by some new increase of the number of the children of God or of the catechumens.

Louise boldly attacked face to face the most formidable and dangerous adversaries of religion: the ministers of Satan himself, the sorcerers or jugglers, commonly called among the Indians *medicine men,* who by their impostures and diabolical arts always impose on the simple and ignorant. They are the most deadly enemies whom the missionaries encounter, and must ever combat in the bosom of the Indian tribes. They never cease by tricks and calumnies and lies to throw obstacles in the way of the missionary and fetter the progress of religion. The presence of the priest is the more odious to them as they know that their private interest, their wealth, is at stake, and that their illicit gains will vanish and cease on the manifestation of religious truths. *Inde iræ!* Hence, their hatred and resentment; hence, too, the incessant war they wage on the ministers of the true faith, and the persecutions they incessantly excite against them, whenever they can exercise sufficient influence over their adherents. And on what a people did they exercise their influence, before the arrival of our missionaries in their country!

Father Point, a missionary among the Cœur d'Alènes from 1842 to 1846, wrote of them as follows, in a letter printed in 1848. These details prove the civilizing tendency and power of religion.

"Not a quarter of a century since, the Cœur d'Alènes were so hard-hearted, that to paint them to the life, the common sense of their first visitors found no expression more just than the singular name which they still bear; minds so limited, that while rendering divine worship to all the animals that they knew, they had no idea of the true God, nor of their soul, nor consequently of a future life; in fine, a race of men so degraded, that of the natural law, there survived among them only two or three very obscure notions, which few, very few, attempted to reduce to practice. Yet it must be said to the credit of the tribe, that there were always in their midst elect souls, who never bent the knee to Baal. I know some, who from the very day when the true God was preached to them, never had to reproach themselves with the shadow of an infidelity."

Among these the most remarkable was our heroine, Louise. Rising above all human respect, she always followed the advice of the missionary. As long as the wily medicine men existed, she untiringly opposed and exposed them. She boldly entered their lodges, and with or without their leave, spoke to them of the great truths of religion, alone true and divine, exhorting them to follow it, in order to avoid the terrible judgments of God, hell with its frightful torments. She did this with such energetic fortitude, and such peremptory arguments, that their obstinacy was shaken and their obduracy softened.

Endowed with a heart and a courage above her sex, Louise feared neither the sneers nor the threats of these deceitful and embittered charlatans. Accordingly, the Almighty blessed the efforts of this "valiant woman" of the wilderness, and always crowned them with such extraordinary success, that in a short time the medicine men and their silly juggleries fell into complete contempt. "In fine," wrote Father Point again, "from Christmas to Candlemas, the missionary's fire was kept up with all that remained of the ancient 'medicine.'" It was a beautiful sight to behold the principal supporters of it, with their own hands destroy the wretched instruments which hell had employed, to deceive their ignorance or give credit to their impostures. And in the long winter evenings, how many birds' feathers, wolves' tails, feet of hinds, hoofs of deers, bits of cloth, wooden images and other superstitious objects were sacrificed!

Among Louise's chief conquests, they especially mention the conversion of Nâtatken, one of the principal leaders of the idolatrous sect. He resisted stubbornly; but at last, touched by the good example of all the converts, and above all, by the exemplary life of Louise's family, with which he was connected by blood, he yielded to the earnest exhortations, the sweet and persuasive words of the young girl, and opening his heart to the grace of our Lord after having been long a rebel, he came like a timid lamb to the humble fold of the Good Shepherd. Louise devoted herself with the utmost care to the instruction of the new catechumen, and formed him to a kind of apostolic work in his tribe. Till then a great master of Indian sorcery, he listened to and followed her wise counsels and instructions with the docility of a child; and after all the necessary trials, Louise led him, humble and contrite, with his wife and children, to the feet of the priest, to receive the sacrament of regeneration. Nâtatken received the name of Isidore. He soon became very zealous and very fervent. Endowed with native eloquence, he unceasingly exhorted his companions to convert and persevere in the faith, and in the holy practices which religion imposes on her children. He gave the example himself. He remained faithful to the grace of the Lord till his death, which was as edifying as consoling.

Emotestsulem, one of the great chiefs of the tribe, after having been baptized under the name of Peter Ignatius, had unfortunately relapsed into gambling, the ordinary forerunner of apostasy among the Indians. As soon as Louise heard this sad news, although she was at a distance of two days' march, she resolved to go to his town and find him so as to endeavor to bring him back to his duties. She set before his eyes the scandal which his conduct occasioned in the tribe, the injustice of his course, and the danger to which he exposed his faith. She spoke to him with energy. Such was the authority that Louise had acquired by her great charity and exemplary life, such was the respect which she commanded from all, that the great chief hearkened to her with the submission of a child, and went to cast himself at the feet of the priest in the tribunal of penance, to repair the scandal and be reconciled to God.

These two incidents, the conversion of Nâtatken and that of Emotestsulem, will surprise all who know how reluctant the Indians, and especially their chiefs, are to receive correction, especially when it is administered by a woman.

Let us say a few words of the famous sect of jugglers or sorcerers, whom our modern spiritualists have begun to style mediums. This sect is spread over all the Indian tribes of both Americas, from the Esquimaux, who inhabit the Arctic regions, to the extremity of Patagonia.

All historians agree in saying, that the most perverse and wicked men in all the tribes are the medicine men. Before their conversion to the faith, as well as everywhere else among the Indian tribes, each Cœur d'Alène had his *manitou* (tutelary spirit or divinity). To this manitou the Indian addresses his prayer or supplication, and offers his sacrifices, when he is in any danger, sets out for war, or goes fishing or hunting, as well as in every other enterprise in which he is about to engage, in order to obtain success or some extraordinary favor. He believes that he can ask everything of his manitou, reasonable or unreasonable, good or bad. To obtain favors, he must be able to handle the bow and arrow, and although initiation to the manitou is considered as the most important act of life, the adept is required to submit to ceremonies and practices which are generally very difficult and often very painful. The young man after making profound incisions on the fleshy parts of the body, or after a rigorous fast, is supposed to discover in his dreams the form or resemblance under which the manitou manifests himself. During his whole life he is bound to bear the image or a mark of it; and on all occasions he must present his offerings and address his prayers to him. His talisman is the feather or beak of a bird, the claw or tooth of an animal, a root, a herb, a fruit, a scale, a stone, no matter what. He believes that this tutelary spirit will protect him against the evil genii, who to injure the children of earth excite the winds and waves, lightning, thunder and storm. This spirit protects him against the attacks of enemies and wild beasts, and in all diseases that come upon him.

If I mention these dangerous and diabolical superstitions, so profoundly rooted in the mind of the Indian, it is to display more clearly the courage, firmness, patience and perseverance which Louise must have had to oppose them successfully and even overcome them. Louise prepared herself for the struggle by long prayers and frequent fasts, and fortified herself by her humility, by her fidelity to the grace of our Lord, who made use of her as a chosen instrument to crush the monstrous serpent beneath her feet, and expel him from her tribe. Nevertheless, the devil never sleeps, he is always sowing tares in the good field, as holy scripture tells us, he "goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." We must always fly to the "Watch and pray," for we perceive always that some trace of the old leaven remains.

As I have already remarked, Louise manifested an ardent desire and an active perseverance in instructing herself in all that pertained to the word of God and the holy practices of religion. She sought in the first place to enrich her fair soul with heavenly truths, and then with admirable zeal and charity she endeavored to relieve the missionary in his laborious toils and the continual fatigue he encountered, especially in instructing old people and children. Entirely wrapped up in her noble calling, she would go several times in the day to the priest, to set forth her doubts and ask an explanation of them, and light on some points either in the prayers or in the catechism, which she wished to fathom more deeply.

This constant assiduity and application to the study of heavenly things, soon rendered her capable of being the head teacher of the catechism, and enabled her to instruct the under teachers with great fruit. At every explanation and development which she received from the missionary, she would say ingenuously, "I thank the Great Spirit for the beautiful alms which he has deigned to bestow on me," and she felt herself bound to impart her knowledge to all the catechumens, to make them partakers in her happiness. She set the example to those good mothers, of whom Father Point speaks in his letter, who, not satisfied with giving their children the food which they refused themselves, spent long evenings in breaking, not only to parents and friends, but also to strangers, eager to hear them, the bread of the divine word, gathered by them during the day. The missionary, sometimes present at the pious meetings of these good women, admired the spirit of God which animated them, and applied to them the promise of the prophet, "The Lord shall give the Word to them that preach good tidings with great power."— Ps. lxvii. 12. The patience and constancy which Louise displayed in the office of catechist, deserve the highest eulogy; the salvation of souls was a work of predilection to her; the hours of the day seemed too short to satisfy her zeal, and she often consumed a good part of the night instructing her neighbor.

Amid all her occupations and exertions for the good of others, Louise never neglected the care and ordering of her own house. Her prayers, her good works, her words and her good example had drawn down the blessings of heaven on her poor and humble abode, and this model cabin, great by the virtues which it enshrined, shone with radiance amid all the other Indian lodges. Louise had comprehended at once and fully the whole extent of the duties of a good wife and mother, duties till then almost unknown to the Indians, among whom, from the moment of leaving childhood, each one becomes absolute master of himself and his actions. By her conduct beyond reproach, by her motherly vigilance over the behavior of her children, by the simple and persuasive gentleness with which she treated them on all occasions, Louise had inspired them with the most profound respect and entire confidence, and had so closely bound to her their tender hearts, that a desire manifested, or a single word from the lips of their good mother, was an absolute order, a law for them, which they accomplished in all its requirements with eagerness and joy.

Louise attended the divine offices with the greatest exactness. Although in delicate health and often sick, she never failed to be present at all the religious ceremonies in use in the church; she attended mass, morning and evening prayers, the expositions and benedictions of the blessed sacrament, and all the other practices of devotion. Her modesty, her recollectedness, and her fervent prayers, always served as an edifying example to all present. She seemed at the summit of her happiness and joy, every time that she was permitted to approach the holy table; her preparation and thanksgiving often took whole days.

In catechising and in church Louise fulfilled all the duties of parents to their children. Sitting in their midst, she watched over their conduct and their innocent bearing. Rarely was she severe; when there was anything to reprehend, the correction was always made with a mother's tenderness and goodness, which won her the hearts not only of the children but also of their parents. She merited and received from all the tribe the beautiful name of *good grandmother*. Her counsels and corrections were always and by all received with respect, submission and gratitude; and the happy results were seen in a complete and blessed change of the whole tribe, thus augmenting joy and happiness in all hearts.

Louise, although the best instructed in the truths of religion, nevertheless came regularly to attend the catechetical instructions which the missionary was accustomed to give the children daily. She could be seen sitting or standing outside the half-opened door, regardless of the weather, heat or cold, rain or snow. She wished to gather all the important points of each instruction for her own spiritual good and that of others.

When there was question of admitting an old man, a boy or girl to partake of the sacraments, she prepared and instructed them for several days in her lodge, impressing them with the high importance of the grace which they were going to receive, and the happiness which they were going to enjoy. She then aided them with the greatest care to examine their conscience. And that nothing should be lacking in the preparation, she took them one by one to the tribunal of penance, telling them: "Here, —— kneel at the feet of the Father, who has the power to reconcile you to the Great Spirit. Say the *Confiteor* with a great sorrow for your offenses. Confess your sins with profound humility." She would then withdraw to a short distance to wait for them, and then lead them to the foot of the altar to receive the spotless Lamb, and be nourished with the bread of angels. Louise did not leave them till they had finished their thanksgiving. She wished to supply in some sort the lack of memory or capacity, when the parties seemed to need it. For fear of being guilty of any grave omission, the chiefs themselves, and many of the most esteemed men in the nation, went regularly to have her assistance in preparing for a worthy reception of the blessed sacrament.

Among other pious practices introduced by Louise in the mission, we are indebted to her for the following. On solemn days, the night previous to the general communion, hymns are sung alternately, sometimes in one lodge and sometimes in another, with charming harmony. These pious canticles have reference to the approaching day, which they are preparing to celebrate worthily. On the eve of the communion, the Indians arrange their exterior, and for most this is no small affair. They wash, clean, and mend the clothes or rags which scarcely cover them; they go and bathe in a retired part of the river, even on Christmas eve and when the water is freezing. Each one keeps in his leather bag, which serves as a wardrobe (for they have no chests or drawers), a piece of linen or white cotton, or a colored handkerchief; the women and girls wear them as a veil, the men as a cravat. Their toilet as you see is very simple and very poor; but each does his best, even outwardly, to come worthily and with respect to the table of the Lord.

Among all the virtues which distinguished Louise, and which she cherished and practised with so much zeal and ardor, shone forth especially her Christian charity to the sick and dying. Father Gazzoli, who has for many years directed that mission, assured me that during Louise's life, he never went to the bedside of a sick or dying person, without there meeting the Indian "Good Samaritan." She devoted herself to the continual service of the sick, and tended them with as much care, patience and interest as she could have bestowed on her own children and parents. While relieving their bodies with admirable and truly maternal charity, she never failed to think of their soul, and devoted herself with still greater zeal and fervor to heal its wounds, especially when the state of the patient's conscience seemed most to require it. She suggested pious thoughts, and recited with them acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, resignation and submission to the holy will of our Lord; she constantly exhorted them to have patience in their painful trials, in imitation of our Lord, who died on the cross to save us; in one word she faithfully served her God in the person of her neighbor, conformable to these words of the gospel: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it to me."—Matt. xxv. 40. With no other recompense than what she expected from her divine Master, she fulfilled all the duties of an excellent nurse. This service she performed with as much exactness and devotedness, as an exemplary Sister of Mercy or Daughter of St. Vincent de Paul could have shown. On many occasions when she wished to exercise her voluntary mission of charity, she had to consent to great sacrifices, and almost heroic efforts over herself, to overcome her natural repugnance. Father Gazzoli relates that one day, according to his custom in certain circumstances, he invited Louise to accompany him to a patient, to aid him in the care which a most loathsome sore required. Such was the sight of the corrupt mass, that for the first time the repugnance of the courageous woman overcame her; she durst not touch it or do the least to dress it. The missionary perceived it, and opened the abscess himself. Some moments after, Louise expressed the most lively regret at having yielded to her feelings, and told him with humility and respect: "I am greatly ashamed, Father; my weakness got the better of me. I admire your charity. I lacked courage to imitate it." She atoned for what she had reproached herself with as a fault, and immediately began to nurse the sick man, and dressed his sore with the greatest assiduity for about two months, till he recovered. It was the first time, added Father Gazzoli, that good Sighouin shrunk from a charitable desire which he expressed, and it was the last. In the sequel and down to her death, under every circumstance, she continued to fulfill, with promptness and fidelity, the requests made by her pious director, and made by him to offer her occasions of victory and merit before God. She had completely triumphed over herself, and in her humble constancy at the bedside of the sick, the most loathsome cases seemed to her the most agreeable and attractive.

Amid Louise's noble acts of charity and patience, may be cited the care she took for several years of a poor child on whom all human miseries of mind and body seemed to accumulate. An orphan, destitute of everything, crippled, blind, and what is worse, stubborn and ungovernable, such was Louise's adoptive child. Such a child was doubtless a rich windfall to exercise a saint. One day she told the missionary that she could not manage Ignatius (that was the orphan's name), and that he would not mind her in the least. The Father, who supplied his food and clothing, thought that by threatening to make him fast, he might be reduced to submission; but when it was tried, Ignatius rolled up his shirt-sleeve, and showing his arm, said: "Look there, I am fat. I can fast." He was then eleven or twelve years old. Such was the disposition of the child on whom

Louise lavished the care of a tender mother for several years, till God recalled the poor boy from this world.

Louise had a niece named Agatha, the only daughter of one of her sisters. She was, and justly so, her child of predilection. Pious, and ever attentive to her aunt's good advice and wise lessons, Agatha verified her name by her exemplary conduct and by her example amid her young companions. She was well instructed in her catechism, and was preparing for her first communion; she had already presented herself at the tribunal of penance to make a good confession, when an attack of apoplexy deprived her of speech. She survived only one day, suffering greatly, but with admirable patience. Her death was a severe and painful trial to the heart of Louise, who long after still kept her loss fresh in her mind, yet she submitted perfectly to the divine will, and convinced that her niece had gone to a better world, she overcame her grief, and shed not a tear; on the contrary, she never ceased thanking the Almighty for the favor he had bestowed upon Agatha, by snatching her away from the dangers of earth to set her in his heavenly mansion.

Louise lived in great poverty; yet the slightest murmur never escaped her to show her wants or her suffering. When the missionary was able to give her any charity, he had first to ask her whether she was not in some need, either of food or clothing. She regarded as nothing the privations and voluntary poverty which she imposed on herself through love for her divine Lord; and for her neighbor. Her lodge, formed of flag-mats, stood beside the *house of prayer*, or church, and near the poor cabin of the missionaries. There in happiness and contentment Louise found all her treasure, all her joy, and the complete fulfillment of her pious desire. There she unceasingly contemplated the home of eternal rest, which the Lord has prepared for his elect in heaven, and to which he alludes in the words: "My kingdom is not of this world."—John, xviii. 36. Those which the Acts of the Apostles add: "In very deed, I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons. But in every nature, he that feareth him, and worketh justice is acceptable to him" (Acts, x. 34), seemed perfectly realized in poor Louise. From her conversion she faithfully followed the career which Providence had traced for her. Poverty with zeal and charity were her joy. Amid the poor of her tribe she may be said to have been the poorest, and always blessed God for her lot. Thus it is, that as we read in St. Mark, the "last shall be first." Sighouin fully comprehended this maxim, and she is at once a striking and consoling example of it. How glorious and beautiful is the society of fervent Christians, in all ranks and conditions of life! By its heavenly doctrines, benevolence admirably tempers authority; justice and charity reign in all hearts; the great humbles himself without derogating from his dignity, and the poor, the lowly, even the poor Indian woman, not only does not fall into contempt, but is elevated by the consideration of a common origin, the hope of a common end, and the distribution of the same means; in the sight of heaven all are equal, for all are children of one same Father, and called, though in different ways, to the possession of a common heritage.

Behold, then, the humble Louise, a poor Indian woman, an obedient, charitable and submissive Christian. Zeal for souls, zeal for the house of God devours her. Endowed with heroic constancy and courage, she surmounts all obstacles that oppose her generous designs. Where does she find her courage, her strength, her consolation, her happiness, if not in the love of her God, in an entire confidence in him, and a holy difference in regard to all else? All her actions seem to express constantly these words: "God alone for me! * * * God alone to-day and forever; * * * God alone for all eternity!" She devoted herself entirely to the cause of God; her labors, her troubles. her pain, will receive their reward. "She hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her."—Luke x. 42.

Louise always manifested a great devotion to the holy cross. In the sowing season, in order to draw down God's blessing on the crop, she each year presented to her spiritual director the seed-corn, to ask him to bless it. She then went through the great harvest field and the fields of the Indians, digging up a little piece of ground in the shape of a cross to plant her grain in. During the whole time that she maintained this practice, it was every year observed, that the crop was very abundant and very fine, even when the neighbors all around lost their grain. She had learned that heaven and earth had been disunited, and that the cross had reconciled them; that no one can enter into heaven except by the way of the cross. She sowed her grain in the form of a cross, having implicit confidence that our Lord, who died on the cross, would fructify it. The cross was her refuge on earth; it was her strength and consolation till death. We may here repeat those beautiful words of the venerable Bishop Challoner: "Jesus is delivered into the hands of his executioners; his suffering, his ignominy begins; he dies on an infamous gibbet; and he is no sooner lifted up, than *he draws all things to him.* The cross dispels the darkness that covered the face of the earth: it unveils the great mystery of life and death, of God, of our duties and our eternal destiny; in a word, in all that till then had been hidden from the wisest of pagan antiquity. The cross teaches us to suffer for the cause of justice, to bear wrongs for the glory of God, to die for his love. How admirably has the gospel been styled by St. Paul *the word of the cross."*

Louise had a tender devotion to the most blessed sacrament of the altar. That great mystery of the love of God, who deigns to lower, and as it were, annihilate himself, and "whose delight is to be with the children of men" (Prov., viii. 31), seemed to touch the good Indian woman most profoundly, and to fill her heart with the liveliest gratitude. Every morning she attended the holy sacrifice of the mass with the greatest recollectedness. For a long time she went regularly to the missionary's cabin to ask explanations and instructions on the holy sacrament of the altar, without his supposing it to result from any motive but a desire of instruction. It was not till after the death of Louise, that he learned that when she had fully comprehended the meaning and seen the explanation of the principal ceremonies and rubrics in the celebration of the most holy mystery, she composed short prayers, full of unction, like those found in our best prayer-books. I must remark here that this practice was then as yet unknown by the catechumens among the Indians, for the missionaries, especially in the first years that followed the establishment of the mission, were unable to go beyond the most elementary instructions on the points of doctrine of the most absolute necessity. But the zeal of Louise was by no means limited to her own soul; she had at the same time in view the spiritual good and advancement of her neighbor by all these holy practices. Gifted with an excellent memory, she communicated with care and eagerness to others all the instructions that she had received on the holy sacrifice of the mass. The beautiful and admirable little prayers of which I have just spoken were in harmony with the different parts of the mass, perfectly conformable to the spirit of the Church, full of sense and piety; they seemed dictated under the inspiration of the divine Master. We may say with all assurance and truth, that this useful work of Louise was far beyond the ordinary capacity and reach of a poor Indian.

Among the holy practices in which Louise displayed most zeal, fervor and charity, and which always seemed dearest to her, all remarked her great devotion for the souls in purgatory. All her prayers, all her actions, all the merits that she might obtain from God by her pious and active life, were directed to this noble intention. She succeeded, too, after persevering efforts, in making the whole tribe relish and adopt her beautiful devotion. Every day, even during the rigorous season of winter, she proceeded to the cemetery to spend some time there in prayer. When the household occupations of her poor family prevented her visiting it by day, she went there late in the evening, or even during the night. This was frequently the case. It seems that hell endeavored to raise obstacles to prayers so agreeable to heaven, and, at the same time, deprive the souls in purgatory of so many suffrages, and good Sighouin of all the merits she daily laid up for herself. The fact was this. Before relating it, I must observe that, in the whole tribe, Louise was regarded as a brave and nowise timid woman, and that on many occasions she gave unequivocal proofs of her natural courage. And yet it several times happened that when at prayer in the cemetery, she would be seized with affright, at the sight of fantastic figures that she seemed to behold before her. Once the spectres appeared in so frightful a manner, that, trembling with fear, she ran back to the camp with loud cries. The men immediately all flew to arms, as though a powerful enemy had assailed the village. All were convinced that the alarm given by Louise must have a real foundation. Father Gazzoli, who relates the facts, had much trouble in restoring order and tranquillity in the camp; he succeeded, however, by promising to act as sentinel all night over his dear Indians. The next day he recommended Louise not to be disturbed in her prayers by the influence of such fears; and in case the phantoms returned again to molest her, to come, even though it were midnight, and tell him, but no one else, so as to create a panic in the village. On this occasion as ever, she showed her obedience and submission; and although the frightful visions returned from time to time, her victory over the demon was complete. From that time for several years, and down to the period of her last illness, she calmly continued her pious visits to the cemetery, exempt from all trouble and all fear. One day the missionary, in an instruction, advised his flock to remember the souls in purgatory, especially after communion. Louise received the recommendation as an advice from heaven, and the first time she approached the holy table, she was seen, after receiving the blessed sacrament, proceeding to the cemetery at the head of all the communicants, where they spent a considerable time in prayer for the relief of the faithful departed. Her example greatly increased this beautiful practice of Christian life; the greatest part of the Indians were soon seen following their pious guide to the place of rest; at last all went. This holy custom is still observed.

Our poor Indians have a very limited intelligence; their progress in religious instruction is very slow, retarded especially by the difficulty which the missionaries encounter in the language of the Indians, which is very rich to express whatever is material; but excessively poor in all that relates to the explanation of spiritual things. Hence it happens that many of these poor people have not yet that salutary horror and shame for sin, which are so powerful a means to restrain men's passions. Thus a woman who has been unfaithful or rebellious to her husband will receive pardon the moment she shows sorrow for it. A man who has grossly insulted another, or done him a grievous wrong, will go and smoke the calumet of peace with the injured person, or enter his lodge or give him an equivalent for the wrong committed. These reparations are generally received and considered sufficient, and the offender recovers the good graces of the injured party. "The wound is covered," as they express it; that is to say, "All is forgotten." When any one commits a fault, secret or notorious, he goes of his own accord to present himself to the chief and ask to be whipped. "The whip has covered his fault," no one can then speak of it. The missionary has sometimes to instruct them in the confessional on this point; for the penitent would come and not accuse himself of grievous faults known to the whole tribe. In vain will the confessor say: "You have been guilty of such or such a sin, you must accuse yourself of it before God." The penitent will reply: "Pardon, Father, I went to the chief, and the sin you mention was covered by the whip; the whip has covered my fault." I mention this usage of the Cœur d'Alènes, because our good Louise sometimes presented herself to the chief to be publicly whipped. But here the case was different; she seized the opportunity in a spirit of profound humility, always regarding herself as a poor and enormous sinner, and at the same time from a desire to satisfy her devotion to imitate our Lord, by submitting to the cruel flagellation. Louise's faults were only of the nature of those of which the Book of Proverbs speaks, when he says that the "just man shall fall seven times and shall rise again."—Prov. xxiv. 16. Nevertheless, what she called her faults caused her such regret and confusion, that the missionary often found her bathed in tears. At the least fault, her contrition was so lively, and at the same time her veneration for the *Lodge of the Lord* (the church) so profound, and her respect for the cabin of the priest so sincere, that she durst not enter either till she had approached the tribunal of penance. We admired in her, too, that faith and that love of God, which, in the real sins and faults of others, made her share in their sorrow and shame.

A certain member of the tribe, blinded by passion, in spite of all the obstacles in the way of his illicit desires, had resolved to unite himself with a near relative of Louise's, and who was at the same time nearly related to himself. Among the Indians there is no power to prevent evil in such a case but argument; when this fails there is no means to which they can have recourse. The wretched man, deaf to all the advice of the chief and of his own friends, obdurately closing his ears to the exhortations of the missionary, had united himself to the object of his desires. The traits which I have already given of the pure soul of Louise, will speak sufficiently the grief and bitterness which this depravity in a near kinswoman must have caused her. She had already employed all the means of persuasion in her power, to prevent the union of these two miserable people. They had turned a deaf ear to her wholesome advice and counsel, as to all that others had offered.

One day the pastor showed himself more than ordinarily troubled and afflicted at the depravity and obstinacy of his two lost sheep, and at the great scandal they gave the whole tribe. He said publicly and vehemently, "We must put a stop to this at once. Let each one then implore the divine assistance, and beg the Almighty, that with as little delay as possible, he will aid to remove this great scandal from among us." Louise was present and heard the missionary's words. She was ignorant of the guilty man's threats, for he had resolved to repel by brute force and by arms, whoever would dare to prevent his retaining the object of his guilty love. Invested with courage above her strength, like the strong woman in the scriptures, and full of confidence in God, brave Sighouin immediately started from the village over woods and mountains, and marched for several days to the spot where the two culprits had hidden themselves to hide their crime and infamy. She entered the lodge to the great surprise of the guilty pair. One rushed at her, whip in hand, the other threatened to strike her; but Louise addressed them on the misfortune of their state, in words so resolute, so energetic, so overwhelming, that they stood silent and confounded before her, and without difficulty she rescued from his hands the woman whom sin alone had made his partner. She took her to her own house, and kept her there till a dispensation was obtained, on which they were lawfully married. The charity and zeal of Louise aided from on high, thus came forth triumphant from a struggle as heroic as it was delicate.

In another and nearly similar case, a wretched man drew his dagger to strike Louise, while loading her with insulting words and terrible threats; but the Christian heroine, with a calm and serene brow, portrayed to him the enormity of his conduct, his ingratitude to God, the scandal given to his neighbor. "I have come here," she said, "for the honor of God, and the salvation of your soul; I fear nothing." Here below, life is but a short passage. "The world passeth away," says the beloved Apostle, "and the concupiscence thereof. But he that doth the will of God abideth forever." — 1 John, ii. 17. Louise fully comprehended these maxims, she never shrunk from any danger when the glory of the Almighty was concerned.

Louise paid special attention to the young girls of her tribe. She took care of their religious instruction, and diligently watched over their behavior. In the absence of their parents she made them all lodge in her cabin of mats, and took the entire direction of them. To understand this, it will be necessary to make a little digression. An Indian lodge of mats is a pretty commodious, though not very attractive abode. It assumes all dimensions, according to the number of persons to be accommodated: a few more poles and mats are added, and the arrangements are completed. Thus Louise was able to make room for a considerable number of beds for the children, for each one has her blanket or buffalo robe. Their tables are the bare ground. Their dishes, plates and spoons, are pieces of bark or wood; their fingers serve for forks and their teeth for knives. It takes an Indian, at most, half an hour to change a lodge into a large hostelry, and furnish it to correspond. Thus Louise was able to see herself at the head of a numerous household who were her delight. How beautiful it was to contemplate the good Indian grandmother, tenderly loved and respected, amid her cherished children!

We may apply to Louise the beautiful words of the scriptures: "Being made perfect in a short space he fulfilled a long time."—Wisdom, iv. 13. After her vocation to the faith, she did not indeed live long years on the earth, but her years were full of merits before God. "She walked in the ways of the Lord with a rapid step." In all that she did, she constantly kept her eyes fixed on her heavenly home, awaiting those eternal goods of which the great Apostle speaks; she made noble efforts, and employed all her moments to embellish and enrich her soul with all Christian virtues. By her regular attendance at the instructions, by her constant spirit of prayer, by the practice of every species of good work, she increased more and more in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and sweet Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Her last illness left her the use of all her faculties, which she preserved to her last breath. She thus prepared for death with all the tranquillity of the just. Her prayer was fervent and uninterrupted; her patience superior to every trial. Entirely taken up with the salvation of her soul, she seemed utterly unmindful of the sufferings of her body; she sought no relief, and never betrayed the least sign of impatience; she often tenderly kissed the cross, which she always carried around her neck. The desire of the Apostle "to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23), seemed to be during her illness her only motto and her only preoccupation.

"Always at the bedside of her who had so greatly aided me in my visits to the sick, and who had always served as my interpreter, and given me her aid with the ignorant — the spiritual directress, the guardian angel of her whole tribe — I had the happiness to witness this touching scene," says Father Gazzoli, the spiritual director of Louise. "Her virtues had shone like a brilliant torch amid the Indians; she had never sullied the white robe of innocence which she had received in baptism. I witnessed the great power of the cross, which displayed in the desert virtues till then unknown; which produces wherever it is planted so many holy martyrs, so many confessors, so many virgins and illustrious penitents. Here, amid these isolated mountains, appears a poor Indian woman, whose unshaken faith and firm hope render her superior to trials of every kind. I desired to relieve her in some way; she in obedience gratefully received what I offered, yet without seeking or asking the slightest relief or the slightest mitigation of her pains, which she accepted as so many special graces of our Lord."

Louise received from the hands of the minister of God all the consolations of the Church, the holy viaticum especially, with truly angelic piety and consolation. She thanked our Lord in all the humility of her soul, for the great favors which he deigned to grant her in that last hour of her earthly anguish, committing to his holy Providence her crippled husband and beloved children. She then made an effort to rally her little remaining strength, to thank her spiritual director for all the care which he constantly lavished on her, and especially in his instructions; she especially commended to his spiritual care the charge of all her family. The words which Louise addressed to her husband and her grieving children were consoling, full of trust in God's divine and paternal goodness, full of resignation to his holy will, and of firm hope to be one day all united again in their heavenly home. At last she turned to those who surrounded her deathbed, happy witnesses of all these edifying scenes, which the just dying in the Lord present to the living, and which realize the words of holy writ: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."— Apoc. xiv. 13. She begged those around to intone in their language the touching hymn in honor of the souls in purgatory, and accompanied it herself in a feeble and dying voice scarcely perceptible. They were still singing it when Louise, unperceived by any, slept calmly in our Lord.

Her beautiful soul had taken its heavenward flight. She happily left the place of trouble, misery and death, to pass to an abode of glory and peace, the delights whereof are eternal. In her were fulfilled what St. James teaches us when he says: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him."— St. James, i. 12. In the pleasing hope that henceforth the eternal crown is her lot, with the deep-seated trust in her power with God, we addressed to her in heaven our poor prayers: "O Louise, intercede with God for him who conferred baptism on you, and was your spiritual director; for your husband, for your children, and for all your dear Skizoumish. Obtain for us all the grace of perseverance in the holy service of our Lord. Amen."

Father Gazzoli then addressed those around:

"Skizoumish! the example of the pious Sighouin is in your midst, we must profit by it. Henceforth she belongs to the whole nation, for she is the common beloved mother. As we all one day desire to share the glorious reward which she has just obtained by her virtues and good works, we must all follow the path which she has traced for us, and which leads to everlasting happiness. From the day of her baptism, in April, 1842, she constantly, night and day, devoted herself to your instruction. In the service of her God, she accepted with joy and eagerness, the privations, misery, contradictions, which it pleased him to send her. In her this day are verified the words of the Lord addressed to the just: 'Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the whole world to try them that dwell upon the earth.'"— Apoc. iii. 10.

The death of Louise Sighouin was the signal of a sudden desolation and a universal grief in the tribe, which lost a mother beloved by all, and especially by the children, a faithful friend to the whole nation, the comfort of the sick and afflicted, a guide and a support! The loss was immense, we avow. Yet this mourning was that of a Christian people, and not that of a perverse and unbelieving world, that has no hope beyond the grave. Amid this Indian tribe was renewed the salutary sadness that we ordinarily admire at the death of the just, whose memory is ever dear and in benediction, according to the words of the Holy Ghost: "O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory: for the memory thereof is immortal: because it is known both with God and with men."— Wisdom, iv. 1.

The minister of the Lord was still reciting the last prayers of the Church, invoking the angels and saints to receive the soul of her who had just expired, to present it at the throne of the Most High, when one of those kneeling beside him, ran out crying: "Sighouin, good Sighouin is dead!" The cry was taken up and echoed in the valley and in the foot of the high mountains which encircle the residence of the Sacred Heart. The Indians ran up in crowds around the lodge of the departed. In their impatience to gratify their desire of gazing once more on the pious woman, the lodge was invaded, but it was too small to hold them all, the mats were torn from the poles; the lodge thus opened on all sides, enabled the crowd of spectators to satisfy their pious wish, and they gazed in admiring silence on the last sleep of Louise.

It is a custom of the Indians for the relatives and friends of a deceased person to assemble in his lodge after his death. When the missionary, after reciting the prayers of the Church, leaves the lodge, he says: "Pray, my children, for the repose of his soul," and adds some words suited to the circumstances. Then, on a signal from one of the nearest relatives of the deceased, all present burst into tears and groans, either real or feigned, or rather they begin lamentations, often forced, and extorted rather by the usual ceremony, than by a real sorrow caused by the loss of the deceased. On Louise's death the scene of mourning was far different: it was doubtless sincere. Father Gazzoli thus relates it: "I was an eye-witness, moved to tears by all that passed. My emotion kept increasing, especially when, even before the end of the prayers, universal cries and tears, interrupted by sobs, announced clearly that no ceremony was enacting here, but, on the contrary, they had assembled to pay a just tribute of gratitude and admiration to Louise's virtues, and to relieve the lively grief caused by her loss."

It must not be imagined that sunset, on this as on other occasions, put an end to these demonstrations of sorrow, regret, veneration and love, displayed over the mortal remains of good Louise: they rather increased. The Indians immediately put up a vast lodge, which they illuminated by a fire of resinous wood. The body, becomingly wrapped in skins of wild animals, was respectfully laid upon a bed of straw; a great number watch around, and recite prayers aloud during the whole night. The pious ceremonies of that night were till then unexampled in the country of the Cœur d'Alènes. There was on this occasion a most touching, edifying and extraordinary unanimity. Men, women and children were seen surrounding with equal eagerness the corpse of Louise, unable to tear themselves from her whom they called by so many titles, their *mother,* their *guide,* and their *true friend.* The prayers and hymns were from time to time interrupted by edifying discourses on the life and heroic virtues of the deceased; the principal chiefs of the nation were the first to retrace most touching pictures of them for the assembly.

The missionary, struck at the spectacle of so striking a testimony borne to virtue by a people possessed of such feeble ideas of it, believed it his duty to go and preside in this pious assembly. He proceeded to the lodge about midnight, at the moment when the eldest son of the deceased was making a panegyric on his beloved mother. His beautiful words, full of simple, unstudied, true eloquence, produced the liveliest sensation and emotion in all his auditory. The abundance of his tears, which did not cease to flow as long as he spoke, prevented him from continuing his long and interesting discourse. The missionary then rose, and while exhorting his good Indians to imitate the example of Louise, he expressed the sentiments of esteem and admiration which her virtues and good works had excited in his heart from his arrival in the mission.

On the day succeeding the death of Louise, her body was carried in procession early in the morning to the church, accompanied by all the Indians of the camp. The labors of the harvest were not resumed all that day. All thought alone of giving in the most expressive manner a mark of their love, their esteem, and their grief, to the common mother of the tribe. After a solemn mass of requiem, and all the other funeral ceremonies of the Church, Father Gazzoli resolved to leave the body exposed during the rest of the day, to satisfy the pious zeal, we might almost say ever increasing devotion, of the many friends of the deceased. Her children, her family, all, in a word, constantly pressed around the bier, and seemed unable to tear themselves from it. It would have seemed too hard and too cruel to put an end so soon to the last expressions of affection of that religious assemblage, of those truly Christian hearts.

At last the day began to wane, and the shades of night would soon infold the valley. The missionary had to make an effort to overcome his own feelings, and to propose to his good children in Christ a separation so afflicting and so painful to their hearts. Yet it was the most favorable time to give the interment a funereal grandeur, and a last tribute of love and respect to the precious remains of Sighouin.

The funeral surpassed all expectation. The children alone, boys and girls, as a proof of their innocent love, had thought of preparing with care a large quantity of resinous splinters. These primitive torches in the hands of these children of nature, dressed chiefly in bear, wolf, jaguar, beaver and otter skins, added to the ceremony, sad and mournful in itself, a peculiar air of wild majesty and savage grandeur, in keeping with the place and the interesting occasion of the assemblage. Perfect order was observed in the procession; modest piety and holy silence reigned in the two long files, one composed of men and the other of women, where nothing was heard but the prayer and the chant. The grave had been dug by the children and kindred of Louise. Her simple and modest coffin was the work of her youngest son. On reaching the cemetery, the Indians ranged themselves in order around the grave, and after the last funeral prayers of the Church and some words of consolation from the priest, the coffin was lowered. Each one present then threw a spadeful of earth into the grave, pronouncing a prayer and a last adieu. This touching ceremony, and the most trifling incidents of the great funeral, live in the memory of our Cœur d'Alènes. They repeat them and will repeat them to their grandchildren; they will render ever memorable this day of Christian sorrow, this religious triumph conferred on a poor Indian woman of the Skizoumish or Cœur d'Alènes.

In the month of February, 1859, in one of my visits to the husband of Louise, a poor old cripple, unable for many years to walk without crutches, I conversed with him on the holy life led by his wife on earth, on her noble qualities and the great virtues of which she had given so striking an example. I asked him what he had most loved and admired in her. "Truly, Father," he replied, "I cannot tell you in what Louise most excelled. From the blessed day on which you conferred baptism upon us, all was good and admirable in her life. Never to my knowledge was there the slightest shadow of a difference between us; not a syllable, not a word louder than another. When I was sick she carried me in the canoe; if I could not use my hands, she cut my food and put it in my mouth. Louise served me like a guardian angel. Now I am an object of pity and compassion, for I am weak in mind. I loved to hear her consoling words, to listen to her wise counsels, to follow her salutary advice, for she was full of the wisdom and spirit of God. The Fathers taught her many beautiful prayers, and we recited them together with our children. Now I have no one to repeat those beautiful prayers to me, and I am to be pitied. Yet I never cease thanking the Lord for the favors which he has not ceased to bestow upon me. I submit myself to his holy will; my heart is always satisfied and calm."

The good old man has always been a subject of edification amid his tribe, universally loved and respected by all the nation. He is a man of the greatest simplicity and of very solid and fervent piety; nothing gives him greater pleasure than a conversation on holy things and on the great affair of salvation. You can never visit him without seeing the smile on his lips and without finding him at prayer, with his beads in his hands. He begins to say the rosary early in the morning; the first is offered to Mary to keep him in the holy grace of the Lord during the day; he recites the others either for the missionaries, for his family, for his tribe, or for some other intention. From the day of his baptism, he made it a duty to pray for me every day, and I feel the utmost gratitude to him.

Good Adolph, such is the name of Louise's husband, related to me among other things, that during his wife's life, when the village set out for the chase, or to get wild roots, and Louise went along with them, he felt very lonesome. When he saw Louise about to die, he told her: "If you die, it will be impossible for me to stay here; I shall find the time so long, I will go back to my own land." "Take care not to do so," returned Louise; "be very careful not to do so, Adolph! Do not remove from the house of the Lord (the church). As I die here, I wish you to remain here till you die. You will not be lonesome." Adolph remains faithful to his wife's recommendation. His cabin is beside the church, and although alone the greater part of the time since the death of Louise, he has not felt the time tedious for a single moment. His beads and prayer are his greatest consolation, and his only delight.

On my recent visit to the Cœur d'Alènes, I again questioned the Indians, in order to obtain new details as to the life of Louise Sighouin. The answer was this: "After so many years it is difficult to add anything to these extraordinary facts, so well known by all, except that from the time of her baptism, her life was an act of continual charity." And I can say, and all that read this narrative will agree with me, that there is no exaggeration in this summary remark. It was a devotedness of every day and every hour, a chain of links of little details of mercy, which offer nothing very striking, unless it be that untiring constancy, which for more than ten years was always prompt night and day in exercising all works of charity, corporal and spiritual. No one will better appreciate this martyrdom of detail than those who are themselves devoted to it; and if we consider that Louise was poor, infirm, that she could only half understand the missionaries, who as yet only stammered the language of the Indians, no one will call in doubt the many graces which Louise received, and the immense profit she derived from the lessons of her divine Master. God had raised up Louise to be the assistant of the apostolic men in the outset of their labors, when they did not understand the language. It had been the same at the Mission of St. Ignatius. The Almighty had given the missionaries the chief Loyola to do among the Kalispels what Louise has done among the Cœur d'Alènes. Both were poor and infirm; it was a lively faith which animated their zeal; both devoted themselves to their last sigh, and both were bitterly deplored after their death. Loyola displayed invincible firmness. "As long as I have a breath of life, my people must walk uprightly," said he; and his virtue alone gave him the authority to speak so. Louise on the contrary had no support in her zeal except her admirable meekness, her unwearied patience. Both died about the same time, when the missionaries began to be generally understood by the Indians.

I have all these circumstances from the missionaries on the spot, especially from the reverend and worthy Father Gazzoli, nephew of the cardinal of that name who died in 1858. This Father is at this moment Superior of the Mission of the Sacred Heart among the Skizoumish or Cœur d'Alènes.

In one of my letters written ten years ago, June 4, 1849, I said: "This extraordinary attention of the Indians, and this avidity on their part for the word of God, must seem surprising in a people who appear to combine all moral and intellectual miseries. But the spirit of the Lord breathes where it pleases him, his graces and his light prompt and aid men whom ignorance, rather than a perverse or disorderly will, has rendered evil. And that same spirit which obliged the most rebellious to cry out with St. Paul: 'Lord! what wilt thou have me to do?' can often soften the fiercest hearts, inflame the coldest, produce peace, justice and joy, where inequity, trouble and disorder reigned. The great respect and attention which the poor Indians show on all occasions to the missionary who comes to announce to them the word of God, are a source of great consolation and encouragement. He finds the finger of God in the spontaneous manifestations of these unhappy men." Since the gospel has been announced to the tribes of the Rocky Mountains, the Lord has always had his chosen souls among them. In the different missions, many neophytes are distinguished by a zeal and piety truly worthy of the primitive Christians, by a rare assiduity at all religious exercises, by the faithful accomplishment of all the duties of a good Christian, in a word, by all the virtues which we have just seen in their highest form in Louise Sighouin.

CHAPTER XII.

HISTORY OF THE FAMILY OF LE GROS FRANÇOIS.[1]

A Lewis and Clark Indian — A Catlin Indian — Tales of a traveler — Destroyed by his own good fortune — Progress of the feud — An outlawed desperado — Prowess of La Main — Things that sometimes happened at the trading posts.

WHEN Messrs. Lewis and Clark made their voyage up the Missouri, the only Assiniboins they met with numbered about sixty lodges of the *Gens des Roches* or Stone Indians, who were the only band of this nation then inhabiting the upper Missouri region. The rest of the nation, about 1,500 lodges in all, resided on the plains of Red river and its tributaries, and traded altogether with the Hudson Bay Company. At the head and as chief of the small band above named was Wahemugga, or Iron Flint, surnamed by the Canadian voyageurs and traders Le Gros François, a sturdy, bulky Indian, no doubt. Several gentlemen of the American Fur Company, now residing in St. Louis, have been well acquainted with this chief, who died some years ago, in an advanced age, near the Minnetaree, or Grosventre, village. He was the father of a numerous family and is supposed to have had fifty children by different wives. His children were scattered in the course of time through the different bands, composing the Assiniboin nation. About the time of his death there remained with him as follows: Wahjanjana, or Light, his oldest son, called by the whites Jackson, from his having visited the President of that name at Washington City. His second son was called Le Sucré, or Sweet. The third was named Bowundapa, or Broken Cloud; the fourth Nappana, or the Hand; the fifth Lakakeana, or *Le Premier qui volle* (the

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[1] From the Linton Album, pp. 118-124.

First who Flies), the same who, in 1851, left Fort Union, in my company, to go and assist at the Great Council, held at the mouth of Horse creek, in the Nebraska valley, under the superintendence of Colonel D. D. Mitchell.

A sameness of character marked this whole family, and ran through many of the other children, who are yet living, though it is not necessary to state their names here. They were all proud, brave and overbearing toward their own people. In battle none were, and still are, better warriors, and for the chase, few equaled them. With the whites, however, their manner was altogether different, being tractable and friendly and supporting the traders in every way in their power. The bravery and good conduct of the eldest, named Light,[2] even brought him into notice, and he was chosen soldier of Fort Union, about the year 1829-30, making it his business to keep the Indians in order when they came to trade, and also to return any horses belonging to the fort that were stolen by his nation, these thefts at the time being very common. It was his custom to pursue the horse thieves to their camp, in company of some of his brothers. The guilty party might think himself very fortunate if he escaped a sound thrashing after the animals were taken from them.

About the year 1831, President Jackson invited deputies of several of these prairie tribes to visit him at the Capital and through the Indian agents made his wishes known to all the Indians. Of the Assiniboins, none could be found to risk the trip except Light, who went in company with a Cree or Knisteneau from the north, "Le Bras Coupé" (the cut arm). I think they passed the winter in Washington City and were well received by their Great Father, the President. In the spring they were sent back to their own people and arrived safe, from which time the Assiniboin was called Jackson, by which name we will call him now.

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[2] Catlin tells the story of this Indian, and gives portraits of him, before and after his travels. (Plates 271 and 272.) He gives his name as "Wi-jun-jon or Pigeon's Egg Head."

The consequence of this trip was the ruin of the Indian. He had seen and knew too much to live according to his former habits. He had been too much flattered and caressed by the whites to respect his own people and thought himself far above them. Sporting a brigadier-general's uniform, a government medal, top boots and a cane, he thought and acted as if there were but two persons in the world worth looking at or talking about, himself and General Jackson. He condescended, however, occasionally to relate some of the strange sights he had seen, which, though strictly true, yet could not be conceived by the limited imaginations of his people. Most of them, knowing his temper, said nothing, but thought him a terrible liar. Sometimes, however, an individual would have the hardihood to call his veracity into question, when a stroke from him with his sword or tomahawk was given on the spot to silence all dispute. He could not conceive why they would not believe him when he told nothing but the truth, and consequently he was involved in continual quarrels, most of which he decided in his own favor by means of his weapons, making a host of enemies around him. He would ring the bell and have his boots blacked, ring the bell for his horse, ring it for a cup of water that stood within his reach. In short, he attempted to establish a complete despotism amongst them. Amongst other qualities it was supposed by the Indians, long before he went to Washington, that he could not be killed by a ball, this from having received several wounds in battle, apparently through vital parts, which yet healed in a short space of time. In truth the Indians thought and said: "He was impervious to death by lead."

One spring evening Jackson, stretched out as usual on his mat in the lodge, rang his bell for his Indian boy and servant whom he had named Tim. The boy making his appearance, he told him to go around the camp and invite a dozen of his people whom he named. "Tell them," said he, "that I am lonesome and will amuse them a little."

The boy went on his errand. About dark the guests began to arrive and soon the lodge was filled, with as many as could come in, amongst whom was a stranger from another camp who had arrived the day before. This fellow was one of those good-for-nothing kind of Indians, who rove about from one camp to another stealing horses and otherwise disturbing the peace. When all were seated and pipes were passing briskly around, Jackson began to tell of some of the sights and scenes he had witnessed whilst at Washington, and in these stories he always set out with saying: "When I was at Washington," no difference at what other place the thing had transpired. On the present occasion he spoke to this effect:

"When I was at Washington, one evening the interpreter told me that on the next day we should visit the Shot Tower (this was in the vicinity of Howard's Park). In the morning, after dressing as usual, we went to the place and, behold, a round stone lodge was there, about the height of four of our tallest trees piled one on top of the other. We went in and ascended in the interior by steps going round the building in the interior, and after counting 260 steps, I arrived at the summit. This building is completely round and smooth on the outside, the base about four times the circumference of our largest lodges, and getting smaller as it goes up."

Here he was interrupted by the stranger above named, who stated that what he told was a downright lie, for how could people get up so high to build. They would have nothing to stand upon, etc. When he had ceased our narrator continued: "With regard to saying 'it is a lie' I will convince you of it when my story is told. As I was going to say, from the top of this building melted lead is poured through a sieve, which in the act of falling becomes round. But from the top of this place is the most beautiful view imaginable. Houses, ships, men and everything look as if seen from the clouds and some are mere specks."

Here the stranger again broke out into a loud laugh and declared it was a "heap of lies." But Jackson would have his story; so, merely observing, "Be patient, be patient, I will convince you presently," he gave a very good description to his auditors of the beautiful scenery from the top of one of these elevated places, in the course of which he was again contradicted by the same individual, in a most positive manner. It was evident he did not know the other's temper and habits, or did not care. However, when he had brought this and other stories to a close, he said: "Friends, it is getting late, we must separate for the night, but before we part, form a ring outside the lodge and I will in the moonlight convince this stranger of the truth of my story."

This being done, Jackson took his cane and stepped out. "Stranger," said he, "when I was at Washington, it happened, in a company in a private house, that some gentleman was relating a strange story to others. I was there with the interpreter. During the recital there was another man present, who, on several occasions, had manifested his bad heart, and on this so far forgot himself as to call the other a liar. The gentleman said nothing at the time, but promised to convince him as soon as the company adjourned, which shortly afterward they did to a bar-room of a public house, when the guest who told the story took the one who called him a liar by the arm thus and caned him most unmercifully." And suiting the action to the word, he broke it over him and belabored him around the circle, much to the amusement of the lookers-on.

The company then dispersed to their several lodges, and the one who got the caning to the lodge where some of his relatives lived. In a short time most of the camp was sound asleep, but one individual slept not. The stranger was busy and employed in filing down a piece of iron about an inch long to fit the size of the calibre of his gun. This completed, he wakened up one of his relations, and told him of the disgraceful punishment that he had received, adding that he was now about to revenge himself and leave the camp. He stated that as his enemy, Jackson, was supposed to be ball-proof, he would try the virtue of an iron slug, and showed the other his bolt. He loaded his gun with care and went to the lodge of Jackson. That individual was sitting on his mat smoking his pipe and perhaps thinking of his visit to Washington. The other, seeing the shadow of his head through the skin tent, placed the muzzle of his gun within a few inches of his head, drew the trigger, and all that remained of our gallant chief was a mangled corpse. The slug tore away the whole of the upper part of the head. The camp took the alarm and searched for the murderer, but he had fled and in the darkness it was useless to pursue.

Jackson left several children, all of whom turned out as brave as he. Some have of late years been killed in battle.

The next of the brothers was Le Sucré, and as soon as the body was mourned over and put in the forks of a tree, according to their custom, he began to make inquiries in the neighboring camp for the murderer, and after some trouble succeeded in finding him out, though in a place dangerous for him to venture, as the whole of his relations were there. He, however, nothing daunted, walked into the lodge and killed the man on the spot, but in his turn was literally cut to pieces by the rest of the Indians.

The regulation of affairs now developed upon the third brother, called Broken Cloud. He was a good man for the whites and well liked by them. He had the same unruly temper as the rest of the family, though more politic with his people. He was a long time soldier at Fort Union and regretted by all when he died. However, Broken Cloud, although determined to punish the murderers of Le Sucré, alſo chose his time for doing it, and with this view, he on several occasions spoke kindly and appeared to be on good terms with them. One winter evening, about two years after the death of his brother, one of the fellows concerned in it happened to turn up at the camp of Broken Cloud alone.

He immediately called the Indian in, gave him his meal, smoked the pipe with him, and to all appearances had forgot all old scores, but, in a few hours, when the man least expected it, clove his skull with his tomahawk and threw his body outside the camp.

For a year or two things went on as usual, when some of the relations of the dead man began to look around for an opportunity of revenging. This, however, was not an easy matter, and by some means or other they made out to get his brother, La Main, to aid them in bringing about his destruction. This Indian, La Main, was a son of Gros François by a different wife, and was also one of the worst Indians then in the nation and had at this time, by his bad conduct, incurred the displeasure of the rest of his family. This being favorable to the enemies of his brother, Broken Cloud, they at length by payment and promises engaged him on their side, choosing the time when Broken Cloud's camp was far off, and learning that he, with a few women, had gone to the fort to trade, they arrived also in the same evening, about twelve in number, apparently as a war-party going to the Blackfeet. It was then the custom for trading and war-parties to sleep in another set of buildings about a hundred yards distant from the fort, in which both the parties encamped for the night, apparently as friends with each other. Nothing was heard by the people of the fort during the night, but on awakening they were informed that Broken Cloud had been murdered in the night by La Main and his party. One of the traders proceeded to examine the body and found it pierced with twenty-three stabs and arrow shots. He was decently interred at Fort Union.

In consequence of this act La Main was declared an outlaw by the rest of his brothers, but he could never be got at with any degree of safety. He remained for the most part with the gang with whom he was concerned, leading them in various war expeditions, in which his desperate bravery gained him credit of power amongst the others, though for his numerous acts of rascality he was despised and somewhat feared both by whites and Indians. On one occasion he went to war upon the Crows with nineteen young men, most of whom were boys of fifteen to eighteen years. They met the Crow camp traveling, and hiding themselves, killed and scalped two Crow Indians. The rest of the camp coming up and perceiving the dead bodies of their people made search and found the whole party of their enemies concealed in an island of timber and brush on the prairie which extended to the waters of the Yellowstone River.

The Assiniboins had made a small barricade of logs and branches and awaited the attack of the Crows, determined to make a desperate resistance. The whole Crow nation surrounded the place and made repeated charges against the barricade, firing in upon the Assiniboins, who returned their fire at close quarters and drove them back many times with loss, though at each discharge from the Crows some of the others were killed. Those remaining, nothing daunted, seized the guns of their dead comrades and continued the conflict. In this way they kept about 600 Crows at bay the greater part of the day, killing ten and wounding twenty or thirty others. To get them out of this shelter the Crows set fire to the timber and underbrush, which, though sometimes a good plan, at this time enabled La Main and three others to escape through the smoke to the timbers of the Yellowstone, whence they found their way to Fort Union. These four and one woman were all that were saved from the battle. The rest had fallen. La Main had his powder-horn shot off, two guns shot out of his hands, his cap and coat riddled with balls, but not a scratch on his skin.

Shortly after this affair another company of traders [Sublette & Campbell] in opposition to the American Fur Company, came on the Missouri and establishing themselves at the mouth of the Yellowstone, commenced their traffic. During the first winter of their trade La Main came alone to Fort Union and in the night, understanding that a party of his people had gone to the other fort to trade whisky, he went down to drink with them.

In the course of their frolic a quarrel sprung up amongst them in regard to La Main, the whole of the party agreeing to kill him. Some of them barred the door of the room in which they were and stood against it. Others advanced upon him with knives, lances, and tomahawks; but such was the activity of this man that for some time he contended alone with twenty-five or thirty Indians, with nothing but a battle-axe. This instrument he wielded in every direction, knocking down some and killing one man. He forced his passage to a window, then leaping through the glass, scrambled on top of the house and cleared the pickets at a single bound. Although at this juncture arrows and guns were fired at him in abundance, yet he got off again without a scar and ran up to Fort Union, three miles above, perfectly naked, on an extremely cold winter's night. The gate was opened for him and after having warmed himself, he told the story of his escape, laughing and in great glee, apparently regretting he had left the place when so much fun was going on.

In a year from this time it happened that the rest of the family of Le Gros François, headed by Le Premier qui Volle, La Main's half brother, came to Fort Union to trade and were put into the usual reception-room for Indians, which room, when the gates of the fort were closed, had no communication with the interior. In the night La Main also came and was let inside of the fort. When he found out who had arrived, instead of making his escape, which he could easily have done, he requested to be let in amongst the others and the gate was opened for him. He promised to smoke and talk with Le Premier qui Volle and his party for some time, when the latter, watching an opportunity, shot La Main through the body. He fell and they finished him by firing five or six shots through him. In the morning, Le Premier qui Volle, as soon as the gates of the fort were opened, tumbled in the dead body of La Main, saying, "Here is the dog who killed my brother, Broken Cloud. Do what you please with him."

Le Premier qui Volle is now at the head of the *Gens des Roches,* about forty lodges, and has turned out a good man for the whites; but his people are afraid of him, the more so because he is surrounded by a large band of relations.

I have made a trip with him from Fort Union to the Platte and have had an opportunity of getting some knowledge of his character. The rest of the family are all of the same disposition and in all probability the same quarrels will be the occasion of their deaths from time to time.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE INDIAN QUESTION.

Melancholy future of the tribes — Game disappearing — Enforced migration of the natives — Misery, destitution and bloody wars — Difficulty of introducing agriculture — Catholic missions needed — Kansas and Nebraska — Tragic end of Father Duerinck — Rapid decrease of the Indians — Their critical position — Attitude of the Republic — Rascality in execution of treaty provisions — Approaching extermination of western tribes — Self-government — Regarding mixture of races — Treaties of 1854 — Progressive invasion — Bad faith of the whites — Indians at their mercy.

Gentlemen:[1]

IN order to complete the observations which I had the honor of offering you in my late letters on the western tribes of Indians of the United States, I purpose submitting to you certain facts touching the present condition of the Indians of the upper Missouri and among the Rocky Mountains.

The facts — such is, at least, my opinion — reveal clearly the melancholy future which at no very remote epoch awaits these nations, if efficient means are not employed for preventing the woes with which they are threatened. My visit to several tribes, and above all that which I lately paid to the great Sioux nation, have only confirmed the sad forebodings to which my experience, during a prolonged residence among these forsaken children of the forest, had given birth. I have communicated these views, in substance, to an honorable agent of the United States Government, who is laboring with ardor and constancy in the amelioration of the condition of the Indians, and who joins, as much as is in his power, the use of means to the laudable wishes of his heart.

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[1] Letter addressed to the directors of the association at Lyons, dated St. Louis, June 10, 1849. Forms Letter V, *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres*, VI, *Western Missions and Missionaries*. The latter text is here followed.

I have traversed at several different times the vast plains which are watered by the Missouri and its principal tributaries, such as the Platte or Nebraska, Yellowstone, the Mankizita-Watpa, the Niobrara, Tchan Sausan, called James river by the whites, the Wasécha or Vermillion and the three great superior forks that constitute the source of the Missouri, viz., the Jefferson, the Gallatin and the Madison. Coasting along the north and south branches of the Saskatchewan, I penetrated 300 miles into the interior of the forests and plains watered by the Athabasca. In every place the whites, half-breeds and natives who inhabit these regions, agree in saying that the buffalo, moose, or American elk, and deer of all kinds, diminish in an alarming manner, and that in a few years these races of animals will have wholly disappeared. The territory traversed by the Athabasca furnished, some years ago, abundant game to the greater part of the nations of the Crees, and to a tribe of Assiniboins, which, sixty years previous, had detached themselves from the main body of their nation.

Well, over this vast extent of territory I met but three families, viz.— an old Iroquois with his children and grandchildren, numbering about thirty-seven; a family of half-breeds, composed of seven persons; and a Sioux with his wife and children. The Crees and the Assiniboins, hitherto the occupants of this land, have been forced to follow the track of the buffalo, and are beginning to intrude upon the territory of the Blackfeet. I resided a long time among the Flatheads and the Kalispels. I have visited at different epochs the Kootenais at the North, and the Shoshones or Snakes at the South. Their vast territories, watered by the principal branches of the upper Columbia and the Rio Colorado of the West, were formerly abundantly provided with every variety of game, which furnished them with clothing and nourishment.

But now that the buffalo has disappeared from these lands, the poor Indians are obliged to go and pass a portion of the year east of the Rocky Mountains, in search of their only means of subsistence. Often, too, in pursuit of their prey, they are drawn into the regions claimed by the Crows and Blackfeet, and are thus obliged to open their way arms in hand. The Yanktons and the Santees, Sioux tribes, are beginning to make inroads on the hunting grounds of the Brûlés, a portion of the Sioux nation. The Poncas are often driven to the necessity of hunting in the lands of the Sioux and of the Cheyennes. Formerly the Iowas, the Omahas and the Otoes subsisted principally on the product of their buffalo hunts; at present they are reduced to the most pitiful condition, having nothing for food but a small quantity of deer, birds and roots. Such is their misery that they are forced to scour the country in every direction, and in little bands, most happy if they escape the ambush of an enemy more powerful than themselves, and who frequently massacre the old, the women and children. It is not rare here to have to deplore similar cruelties. Each year shows an increase of these revolting scenes — melancholy forerunners of an approaching and tragical issue.

The Pawnees and the Omahas are in a state of nearly absolute destitution. Surrounded by enemies, where shall they go to hunt the wild animals which often fail them, having retired to other sections? It is true that for a considerable time it has been customary among them to cultivate a little field of squashes and corn; but often, also, when the harvest appears to meet their expectation and their toil, the enemy comes suddenly and wrests from them this last pitiful resource.

The buffalo is disappearing and diminishing each successive year on the prairies of the upper Missouri. This does not, however, hinder them from being seen grazing in very numerous herds in particular localities; but the area of land that these animals frequent is becoming more and more circumscribed. Besides, they do not remain in the same place, but change pasturage according to the seasons.

Thence arise the incursions which the Sioux make into the territories of the Aricaras, the Mandans, the Minnetarees, the Crows and the Assiniboins; thence also the mutual invasions of the Crows and the Blackfeet in their respective hunts. These depredations are committed by all the wandering tribes of the desert, and give birth to dissensions, and to incessant and bloody wars, which annually revive and multiply, to their great detriment and misfortune. It is not, therefore, astonishing that the number of these savages is gradually decreasing. In the plains, war and famine lend their aid; on the frontier of civilization, liquors, vices and maladies carry them off by thousands.

I have visited the Blackfeet, the Crows, Mandans, Assiniboins, the Aricaras, the Minnetarees, etc., who possess the whole region of the upper Missouri and its tributaries. The condition of all these savages, far from the influence of all religious and moral principles, renders them much alike — *ejusdem farinæ*. Among them all are met the same cruelty, the same barbarity, the same sloth and supineness, in fine, the same degrading and revolting superstitions, pushed to the most remote limits which the human mind abandoned to itself, and under the empire of vile passions, can reach.

It is quite a common observation, and I have myself heard it offered by several persons, that the "religious as well as the social condition of the Indians of these regions, is in nowise capable of amelioration." I am far from participating in this opinion. Let the obstacles arising from the people who style themselves civilized, be removed; let all trade in ardent spirits, that deadly scourge of the Indian, be prevented; let missionaries be sent, whose zeal is prompted only by the love of our divine Master, and with no object but the happiness of the poor souls intrusted to their care, and I am confident that in a short time we should have the consoling spectacle of a sensible improvement among them.

My personal observations serve as a foundation for these hopes. I have had frequent interviews with the Blackfeet, the Crows, the Assiniboins, the Aricaras and the Sioux. They have always lent the most marked attention to all my words; they have ever listened to the holy truths which I preached to them with extreme pleasure and a lively interest. They entreated me with the most captivating ingenuousness to take compassion on their miseries, to establish myself among them, promising to join a faithful practice to the knowledge of the truths I should impart to them. Among the Indians of the great American desert, I never found even one who presumed to rail against our holy religion.

To put an end to the cruel wars which decimate these nations; to rescue so many souls from the baneful consequences of the idolatry in which they are buried; to prevent the total destruction of these tribes already so wretched, and yet redeemed like ourselves by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is it not an enterprise worthy of inflaming the zeal of a minister of the gospel? a work worthy of claiming the efficient co-operation and assistance of a government as powerful as is that of the United States?

As to agriculture, considered as a means of civilization, its introduction will always be difficult among the Indians, as long as there remains to them a hope of procuring buffaloes or other wild animals. It would prove, in my opinion, a chimera to pretend to introduce this branch among them on an extensive scale in the beginning. We know, however, by experience, that, although little habituated to the fatigue of the assiduous labor that farming requires, some tribes have already attempted to cultivate their little fields. This step taken, each year, according to the abundance of the increase, the limits of these little fields might be extended. Like their brethren who reside west of the Rocky Mountains, they would become more and more attached to the soil whose productions would be the result of their toil. Their roving habits, the wars which often spring from them, would insensibly give place to a more peaceable and domestic life.

The animals which they would raise, replacing the buffalo, would insensibly efface its memory amid surrounding plenty.

During the last ten years, a great part of the disposable funds of the vice-province of Missouri have been employed in the relief of the Indians. The liberality of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith established at Lyons, and that of our friends, have assisted us powerfully in converting and civilizing the tribes beyond the Rocky Mountains. Several of our fellow-members still pursue there the same work of charity, and many of our Fathers and Brothers desire to visit the tribes which I visited last year. An establishment founded among them east of the Rocky Mountains would be most desirable; but the pecuniary means which they have at their disposal are very far from answering to the work which they contemplate. The lively interest which you take, gentlemen, in the salvation and civilization of so many thousands of men in the wilderness, inspires me with confidence to appeal to your generosity, which alone can furnish the means of conducting to a happy conclusion an enterprise so vast and so eminently Catholic.

There are among these Indians several hundreds of children of mixed blood, whose parents are anxious that means of instruction should be afforded them. To attain this, schools and establishments would be necessary, in which agriculture could be learned; and also many children of pure Indian blood could be received, as the heads of families are desirous of confiding them to the care of the missionaries. A short statistic will give you an idea of the good which might be done among these Indians. Among the Blackfeet, Father Point and myself baptized more than 1,100 children; among the Blood Indians, a tribe of Blackfeet, Monseigneur Thibault baptized sixty; the Reverend Monseigneur Bellecourt, of Red river, visited Fort Berthold, on the Missouri, and baptized a good number of the children of the Mandans; all the savages presented him their children for baptism. Father Hoeken, in an excursion made among several tribes on the Missouri, baptized over 400 persons. Monseigneur Ravoux, who visited some tribes of Sioux in 1847, and penetrated as far as Fort Pierre, was listened to everywhere with a consoling eagerness, and baptized a great many children. In my late tour among the Sioux, the Poncas, etc., I baptized more than 300 children and several adults.

From all these facts, may we not conclude, with sufficient certainty, that these poor souls seem ripe for a more peaceable life, and for a blessed eternity?

I have the honor to be, etc.

Reverend and Dear Father:[3]

I send you a copy of a letter that I addressed to Mrs. P [armentier], a Belgian lady, residing at Brooklyn, near New York. She is a great benefactress of the missions. My letter contains some details concerning my recent visit to the Potawatomies, on the present very critical state of those Indians, and of all the nations and Indian tribes in the two new Territories of Kansas and Nebraska.

What I wrote to you in December, 1851, and you published in the *Précis Historiques,* of 1853, pages 398, etc., has been literally verified. A great number of towns and villages have sprung up in it as if by enchantment. The principal towns of Kansas are: Wyandot, Delaware, Douglas, Marysville, Iola, Atchison, Fort Scott, Pawnee, Lecompton, Neosho, Richmond, Tecumseh, Lavinia, Lawrence, Port William, Doniphan, Paolo, Alexandria, Indianola, Easton, Leavenworth, and many others. They differ in population and improvements. Lawrence and Leavenworth are the most considerable. This latter, which is now an episcopal city, contains already more than 8,000 inhabitants. They project building a territorial university in the town of Douglas. A medical college is established at Lecompton. The University of Kansas is incorporated and established at Leavenworth. Funds are set apart for the erection of schools, on a vast scale. They accrue from the sale of lands granted by the United States, which are extraordinarily extensive. All fines, pecuniary penalties, escheats, ordained by law, are also to be poured into the treasury of the schools and colleges.

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[3] Letter addressed to the editor *Précis Historiques,* Brussels, dated University of St. Louis, February 26, 1858. Forms Letter XLV, Second Series, *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres,* and XXVII, Second Series, *Western Missions and Missionaries.* The latter text is here followed.

Two months from this, the Territory of Kansas will be admitted as an independent State, and will form a portion of the great confederation of the United States. There exists little doubt, at present, but that Kansas will adopt the laws of the free States — that is to say, there will be no slavery.

Good Father Duerinck left a manuscript concerning all that passed in the Mission of St. Mary's. If it would give you pleasure, I will send it to you, according as my time will admit.

University of St. Louis, February 24, 1858.

Mrs. S. P [armentier], Brooklyn, N. Y.:

Madam.— I have just terminated a journey of over 800 miles, going and returning in the midst of ice and snow by the most miserable roads and in wagons, which increased the inconveniences of the way. On my return to St. Louis, your kind letter and charitable donations were remitted to me. Accept my most humble thanks, with my heartfelt gratitude. I will assign the vestment to the mission of the Flatheads, which is very poor in church furniture. I hope to find, in the beginning of spring, a good opportunity of dispatching it by the boats of the Fur Company. The marine plants will be most acceptable to Fathers B. and H. in our colleges of Namur and Antwerp, in Belgium, and will be admired, I am sure, in the collections of those two establishments. Once more, Madam, receive my sincere thanks for the new benefits that you have just added to the long list of numerous others, commenced many years since; and for which we have naught but poor prayers to render. We shall not cease to address them to the Lord, for the happiness of your family; and I will appeal to our pious Indians, that they continue to pray for their kind Mothers — their good benefactresses.

The occasion of the voyage, which I have mentioned in the beginning of my letter, was a glimmer of hope of being able to discover the body of our dear brother in Jesus Christ, the Reverend Father Duerinck. Some days after the unfortunate accident, the captain of a steamboat had seen a dead body on a sand-bank, near the place of the accident, and had buried it. At this news I started to visit that solitary grave, on the bank of the Missouri, near the town of Liberty. He whom this grave contained was not the brother, the cherished friend and relative I sought. His dress denoted a hand on some boat. I was very much grieved. Our petitions so far have not been heard. We hope, however, that the great St. Anthony of Padua, implored by so many pious souls, will be propitious; and I beg you to be so kind as to join your prayers with these fervent invocations. It would be a source of consolation could we find the lost remains of Father Duerinck, and inter them in consecrated ground, beside his brethren who have preceded him.

From the town of Liberty I repaired to St. Mary's, in order to regulate some affairs there. I began the mission of the Potawatomies in 1838. My heart seemed to dilate among these good children of the plains, where in former days I had found so many consolations in the exercises of the holy ministry. I had the happiness of seeing a great number of Indians approach holy communion, with the deepest recollection. From the altar I addressed them some words of consolation and encouragement in the service of the Divine Pastor. They have great need, especially at present, for the whites have surrounded them on all sides; and they will soon hem them in more closely on their own little reserves, or portions of earth that the Government has granted them.

I am aware, Madam, that you take a deep interest in the welfare of the poor Indians. Allow me, therefore, to converse with you some moments on their position in general, and in particular of what concerns the Indians of St. Mary's among the Potawatomies.

At the period of my arrival among the Potawatomies (in 1838), the nation numbered beyond 4,000 souls. It is now reduced to 3,000, of whom 2,000 are Catholics. All the surrounding tribes have diminished in the same ratio.

To what are we to attribute this rapid decrease of the Indian race? This is one of those mysteries of Providence that all the sagacity of philosophy has in vain endeavored to penetrate. The immoderate use of intoxicating liquors, change of climate and of diet, vices, pestilential maladies (all these evils which contact with the whites produces among savages), improvidence and want of industry, all, united or singly, give, it appears to me, but an imperfect solution of this great problem. Whence is it that the redman bends with such difficulty to the manners and customs of the European race? Whence is it again, that the European race refuses so obstinately to sympathize with the red race; and notwithstanding its philanthropy, or love of mankind, seems rather disposed to annihilate than to civilize these poor children, offspring of the same Father? Whence springs that insurmountable barrier between the two races? Whence is it that the stronger pursues the weaker with such an animosity, and never relents until the latter is overthrown? There is involved in this, perhaps, a secret that none but the Judge Supreme can explain.

Often when I reflect on the position of so many barbarous nations, who formerly were the owners of so immense countries, and which are at the present day in imminent danger of being totally dispossessed by another people, I call to mind the primitive inhabitants of Palestine, who, masters also of one of the most beautiful countries in the world, saw themselves deprived of it by a severe but most just judgment of the Creator, whose menaces they had despised and whose glory they had profaned. Like the Canaanites, the savage tribes, taken in general, have been punished gradually. Perhaps they, like them, have been too long deaf to the divine voice, inviting them to quit their gross errors and embrace the doctrines of truth. Who has entered into the councils of eternal wisdom? Who can accuse his judgments of injustice? Cannot God, to whom the whole creation belongs, dispose of his property according to his own good pleasure? But in displaying his justice, he forgets not his mercy. Here below he strikes only to heal. His divine heart is ever open to those even whose iniquities he punishes.

The melancholy changes to which the condition of the Indian has been subjected within a few years, have led me to these mournful reflections. Under the administration of President Pierce, the whole vast Indian country within the Rocky Mountains, comprehended in the vicariate of Bishop Miège (except a little portion situated toward the south), has been organized into two Territories, known under the names of Kansas and Nebraska; that is to say, the Congress has decreed that this country is incorporated into the Union and open to the whites who are willing to settle there, in order to form, after a lapse of time, two States, similar in all respects to the other States of the Great Republic. Although, for the moment, the new colonists have orders to respect the territories or the lands reserved to the savages, we may nevertheless say that this decree has virtually destroyed all the Indian nationalities. Scarcely was the law known when the emigrants, like the waters of a great river which has overflowed its banks, impetuously passed the barrier and inundated the country.

Now see the poor Indians surrounded by white men, and their reserves forming little more than islets amid the ocean. The savages who before had vast countries for their hunting grounds, are at present restricted within narrow limits, having naught for subsistence but the product of their farms, which few of them know how to cultivate properly. Again, this state is only precarious. Unless they hasten to divide their lands and become citizens, they are in danger of losing all, and of being naught but vagabonds. How replete with difficulties is such a change! What a stormy and tempestuous future for these unfortunate tribes! The evil is great, but it is one that must be encountered, since there is no remedy. The Indians, even the most advanced in civilization, seem to us ill-prepared to meet all the exigencies of their situation.

In order to form a just idea of their critical position, and of the melancholy consequences which will be the result, unless restrained by a special protection of divine Providence, imagine two societies — one representing the manners and customs of barbarians, the other all the splendor of modern civilization — coming in contact. How many years will elapse before there will be a perfect fusion between the two societies, before unison will exist, before they can dwell together in complete harmony? Much time will be required ere the barbarous state will attain the height of the civilized! Neither the first, nor the second, nor the third generation, notwithstanding untiring efforts, would obtain that happy result, such as the thing is understood in our days. Hence, previous to a perfect fusion between the societies, the civilized society will have the advantage over the barbarous; it will have it entirely at its mercy, to make it subservient to its will and pleasure. In a word, the barbarian can no better sustain itself in presence of civilization, than the simplicity of childhood can contest against the malicious prudence of mature age. This, in my opinion, is what will be realized in the Great Desert, when the copper-colored race will come in contact with the white. The judgment of the savage is not sufficiently ripe to be able to compete with the wisdom of man born in the bosom of civilization. It is this conviction which fills us with anxiety for the future of our dear neophytes in the different missions. We confide solely in divine goodness, which, we hope, will not fail to come to the help of his children.

It was not difficult to descry from afar that grand event which must engulf in one common wreck all the Indian tribes. The storm which has just burst forth over their heads was long preparing; it could not escape the observing eye. We saw the American Republic soaring, with the rapidity of the eagle's flight, toward the plenitude of her power. Every year she adds new countries to her limits. She ambitioned nothing less than extending her domination from the Atlantic to the Pacific, so as to embrace the commerce of the whole world, and dispute with other mighty nations the glory of pre-eminence. Her object is attained. All bend to her sceptre; all Indian nationality is at her feet. Far be it from us, however, to accuse the noble Republic of injustice and inhumanity in her late treaties. It seems to us, on the contrary, that no nation has ever furnished them more means of civilization. If any one must be blamed on this point, it is rather private persons, new colonists, who act and place themselves in direct opposition with the good intentions of the Government in behalf of the savages.

But though the future appears sombre and melancholy, the past, at least, leaves not the missionaries comfortless. In the space of the last ten years, our Fathers at Saint Mary's have baptized beyond 400 adults, and a great number of children. The gospel seed has not fallen on sterile soil. The greater part of these neophytes have always given proofs of a strong faith and of a tender piety. The heart of the missionary is soothed with an unspeakable joy, on witnessing their assiduity in the church, their ardor in approaching the sacraments, their resignation in sickness, their natural charity, exercised especially in regard to the poor, the orphans and the sick; and above all, their zeal for the conversion of unbelievers. They are styled savages, but we may boldly assert that, in all our great cities, and everywhere, thousands of whites are more deserving of this title.

A great number of Potawatomies have made considerable progress in agriculture, and live in a certain degree of affluence. The whites who pass by, and visit the little territory of the Potawatomies, especially in the environs of St. Mary's Mission, are agreeably surprised. They find it difficult to believe that they are among Indians.

It must be acknowledged that the Potawatomies have been specially favored by heaven. During the last quarter of a century, they have had the happiness of having Blackgowns among them; and, during sixteen or seventeen years, they have Ladies of the Sacred Heart, for the education of their girls. The mission, on its present footing, with its two schools, for girls and boys, is a double advantage for those good people. The children acquire there, with religious instruction, the love of industry; the adults find employment in it, and hence a means of subsistence. They see, by the manual labor of our brothers, what man can acquire by diligence.

We may add that God has treated the Potawatomies with great predilection. He has willed that several nations should contribute to their salvation. Such are, among others, Belgium, Holland, France, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Canada and the United States. Each of these countries has offered them material aid and missionaries. Monseigneur Miège has resided among them four years; hence their humble temple, constructed of logs, has been exalted to the rank of cathedral.

In the critical conjuncture in which they stand at present — on the eve of forming a last treaty with the Government of the United States, a treaty of life or death for this poor tribe — they have, in the person of Colonel Murphy, the agent of the Government, an advocate, a protector, and the best of fathers. This, Madam, leads me to hope that God has very particular designs of mercy over them, and that he will never forsake them. In the moment of danger, you, I am confident, will not forget them in your charitable prayers.

Be so kind as to recall me to the kind remembrances of Mr. and Mrs. Bayer, and of Miss Rosine, and believe me, with the most profound respect and esteem, Madam.

Your most humble and most obedient servant, etc.,

The aborigines,[8] or first inhabitants of the soil, are forced (*nolens volens*) to sell and cede their lands, with the ashes of their ancestors, so dear to their hearts and to all their recollections, in order to make room for the strangers who come in to settle the new States and Territories, and to go and occupy some new reserve, unknown and limited, which in turn they must abandon later; and so on from one reserve to another, until there remain only arid, sterile lands, uninhabitable for white men, and without game, where they drag out a miserable existence, dwindle away and disappear. The payment of their annuities, for the millions of acres of land that they have ceded to the Government, are often overlooked or deferred, though they are the Indians' only means of support; and often, too, when these annuities get through to their destination, there are rascals following or accompanying them who extort the pittance from the Indians, exchanging it for barrels of "fire-water," or useless trinkets. The terms of the treaties are often transgressed, and the Indians overwhelmed with injuries and insults. Woe to them, if they resist the unjust and wicked aggressors, for then they are driven out or massacred like wild beasts, without pity, or the least remorse, or any thought that the killing of a savage comes under the head of murder. A certain C———, a Methodist minister, transformed into a colonel of militia and placed at the head of a fort, ordered the massacre (children, women, and old men included) of several hundred Indians, who had come to make a friendly visit to the post, according to their habit of many years' standing. All the papers were full of it and the frightful atrocity was fully exposed; still the monster found admirers and defenders, and still wears his epaulets. This is one case among a thousand. Is it surprising that the victims of such cruelties and oppressions, having no recourse to any laws for justice, rise furious, dig up the tomahawk and make their appeal to their quiver and scalping-knife, as their last and only resort for the remedy that is denied them elsewhere?

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[8] Extract from a letter in French, dated On Board the Steamer *Ontario*, Fort Benton, Montana, June 10, 1866. See page 856.

University of St. Louis, December 30, 1854.

Reverend Father:[4]

The "Indian Question" has been much agitated in the United States during the course of this year. Two great Territories, Kansas and Nebraska, will henceforth form a portion of the great confederation. They embrace all that part of the wilderness included between the confines of the State of Missouri and the forty-ninth degree of north latitude, and extend westward to the summit of the Rocky Mountains.

Questions concerning the future of the Indians have frequently been laid before me by persons who appear interested in the destiny of these poor creatures. Knowing the affection and the interest which you, Reverend Father, entertain for them, I propose giving you my views and apprehensions in regard to them — views and apprehensions which I have long entertained. I have already said a few words on the subject, in a letter written in 1851, and inserted in the fortieth number of your *Précis Historiques.* In the course of that same year I received a letter from a much-respected gentleman[5] in Paris, who requested me to give him some details of the condition and present state of the Indian tribes of North America. I will give you in this letter the questions of that correspondent, and my replies. I will add what has passed since; above all, the resolutions taken and the treaties concluded, from 1851 till December of the year 1854, between the American Government and the aborigines.

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[4] Letter addressed to the editor *Précis Historiques,* dated St. Louis, December 30, 1854. Forms Letter XIV, Second Series, *Cinquante Nouvelles Lettres* and *Western Missions and Missionaries.* The latter text is here followed. Father De Smet made numerous copies of these questions and answers, in French and English, for various correspondents.

First Question.— Do you think that the aborigines west of the Mississippi will be exterminated like those east of that river? In other words, will the Indians west of the Mississippi share the same fate as their brethren east of it?

Reply.— The same lot that the Indians east of the Mississippi have experienced, will at no distant day overtake those who dwell on the west of the same river. As the white population advances and penetrates into the interior, the aborigines will gradually withdraw. Already, even (in 1851), it is perceptible that the whites look with a covetous eye on the fertile lands of the Delawares, Potawatomies, Shawnees, and others on our frontiers, and project the organization of a new Territory — Nebraska. I should not be surprised if, in a few years, negotiations were entered upon for the purchase of those lands, and the removal of the Indians, who will be forced to retire farther west. The great openings offered to emigration by the definitive arrangement of the Oregon Question, as well as the acquisition of New Mexico, California and Utah, have alone, thus far, hindered any efforts for extinguishing the Indian titles or rights to the lands situated immediately west of the State of Missouri, and those situated on the south side of the river Missouri, between the rivers Kansas and Platte, and probably as high as the Niobrara or *L'Eau-qui-court*.

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[5] Réné de Semallé.

Second Question.— In case the Indians, having formed a constitution for their own government, should find themselves in the territory of one of the United States of America, would there not be reason to fear that these rising communities would be treated with the same barbarity and injustice as were the Cherokees, who, contrary to all equity, were deprived of their territory by the State of Georgia, and transported to the lands of upper Arkansas?

Reply.— I answer in the affirmative. In a few years hence (1851), treaties will probably be concluded with those tribes for "reservations," that is to say, for portions of their lands set apart for their future residences. But, although the letter of the treaty guarantees them such "reservations," you may rest assured that as soon as the supposed necessities of a thriving white population demand these lands, the whites will find pretexts for dispossessing the Indians. This is accomplished, either by negotiation or nominal purchase, or by rendering their situation so painful that they find no alternative but a transfer or emigration.

Third and Fourth Questions.— When the Territory of Oregon is incorporated as one of the States of the Union, could not the missionaries of that region organize the converted tribes into districts and distinct counties, peopled with American citizens of Indian origin? Then the property of the Indians would become inviolable, and the missionaries would have time to persuade them to abandon their wandering, hunter life, and embrace the pastoral; after a time they would cultivate the soil, without being disturbed by the pretensions of the whites.

Reply.— When Oregon takes her place as a State in the Union she will follow the same policy that has been hitherto followed by the other States; that is, she will subject all the inhabitants to her jurisdiction and laws. The policy of the United States has ever been to remove the Indians from each new State as soon as it is admitted as a part of the confederation; and in case portions of the tribes remain on their lands, as was the case in the States of New York, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio, the situation of the Indians is extremely disagreeable, their progress very slow. Comparing themselves with the whites who surround them, and whom they see, ordinarily, so enterprising and industrious, they generally experience a sentiment of inferiority, which overwhelms and discourages them. The Stockbridges (Mohegans[*]), who enjoyed for several years, all the rights of citizens in the State of Wisconsin, petitioned the authorities to relieve them from their obligations as such, and earnestly solicited the Government to grant them an abode, either in Minnesota or west of the Missouri. Even those who live in the "reserves," fine sections of land granted and secured by special treaties, in Illinois, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio, finding themselves strangers on their native soil, sold all they had and rejoined their tribes in the West. The neighborhood of the whites had become intolerable to them. When the lands of the Indians cease to be valuable, and the whites will and can do without them, then only will the Indians enjoy the privilege of retaining them.

Fifth Question.— The following is an extract from a law of the 27th of September, 1850: "It is granted to each inhabitant, or occupant of public land, including herein the half-breeds above eighteen years of age, citizens of the United States, or having made a declaration of intention to become citizens, or who shall make such declaration either before the 1st of December, 1851," etc. Remark that this law proves two things; first, that there are half-breeds in Oregon; second, that the half-breeds have the rights of white citizens. Do you not think that at some future day, say in the course of a century, Oregon will be peopled solely by a heterogeneous race, with striking traits of a mixed race of Indian and white blood, and a remnant of the aborigines

[*] Iroquois.

in the defiles or valleys of the mountains, like the Celts of Scotland and the Araucanians of Chile? Then Oregon would enter the category of all the Spanish States of South America, in which the red men, far from being exterminated, have, on the contrary, made efforts to assimilate themselves to the whites.

Reply.— I answer to this last question, that in case the missionaries should collect the half-breeds with the most docile Indians, in districts or counties, under this territorial law of Oregon, and give the youth an education, both religious and agricultural, the result would be a greater mingling of Indian and white blood, and thus the future population of Oregon would be in some manner heterogeneous.

The future prospect of the Indian tribes is very dark and melancholy. Placed, as they are, under the jurisdiction of the United States, surrounded on every side by whites, their ruin appears certain. These savages disappear insensibly as the emigrations of the whites succeed each other and advance. In fifty years there will be few traces of the native races in the western portion of this hemisphere. Where are those powerful tribes which, at the commencement of this age, dwelt in the extensive and beautiful region, now divided among the States of the West? Remnants only exist on our western frontiers. In our own day the same causes are in full play, and produce the same effects. And for the last four years, the great tide of European emigration but makes the effect more certain. These emigrations multiply more and more in the present day, and succeed like the waves of ocean. They must find room; that room is the West.

Such are the responses which I gave in 1851 to M. D—. In the space of three years, what was simply an opinion has become a fact. My answer to the second question has been literally verified.

In the course of this year, 1854, treaties were concluded with the Omahas, the Otoes and Missouris, the Sauks, the Foxes of Missouri, the Iowas, the Kickapoos, the Shawnees and the Delawares, as well as with the Miamis, the Weas, the Piankeshaws, the Kaskaskias and the Peorias. By these treaties, these different tribes cede to the United States the most extensive and most advantageous portions of their respective territories, and retain, as we have already said, but a limited and circumscribed demesne, termed a "reserve," for the wants of each particular tribe, and intended as their future residence.

We remark daily in the newspapers that great numbers of emigrants are spreading already over the territories ceded; yet the conditions precedent of the treaties between the Government and many of the tribes expressly forbid the whites to settle there before the survey and sale of the lands to the profit of the Indians. Notwithstanding these conditions, the whites settle there, and even defy the authorities to deter them.

The new organization of the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska abrogates the protecting "intercourse laws." Thereby it has overthrown the feeble barrier which opposed the introduction of intoxicating liquors, which the inhabitants so expressively define by the term "Indian firewater." In a few short years these little reservations, or Indian settlements, will be surrounded by a white population; these whites, being for the most part vicious and corrupt, will introduce and furnish liquors in abundance, in order to satisfy the depraved taste of the Indian. In all this the sole object is to deprive these unfortunate men of all that remains to them in land and money. In this position of affairs, I cannot conceive how the Indians can be protected against the dangerous influences which will inevitably surround them on all sides. Ere long (perhaps by the close of 1856) the delegates of the Territory of Kansas will knock at the door of Congress for admittance into the Union. If this request be granted, we may at once bid farewell to the independence of the Indians and the maintenance of their reservations. The new State will directly establish her jurisdiction over all the inhabitants found within her limits.

Although the Indians appear to be necessarily protected by the general stipulations accorded on the part of the Government itself, constant experience demonstrates that they cannot exist within the limits of a State, unless they become citizens thereof. Witness the Creeks and Cherokees in the State of Georgia, who at one time were on the point of bringing the General Government and the State into conflict.

In several of the late treaties that I have mentioned, the Indians have renounced their permanent annuities, and, in exchange, have consented to accept considerable sums for a limited number of years, and payments at fixed terms. However liberal be the annuity, the Indian never lays anything aside for his future necessities; this is his character. He lives from day to day. All is expended in the course of the year in which the payment is made. Let us suppose, therefore, that the amount of the last payment has been poured forth, what will consequently become of those poor tribes? Here, it appears to me, is the solution of the problem: They must either perish miserably, or sell their reserves, or go and rejoin the wandering bands of the plains, or cultivate the soil. But, observe well, they are surrounded by whites who contemn them, hate them, and who will demoralize them in a very short time. If it be asked, to what must be attributed the improvidence of the tribes, which neglect to exchange their permanent annuities for sums to be paid at limited terms, but of greater length? The reason is found in the disparity of the parties who make the treaty. On one side stands a shrewd and, perhaps, unscrupulous Government officer; on the other, a few ignorant chiefs, accompanied by their half-breed interpreters, whose integrity is far from being proverbial.

Adding to these facts the ravages caused every year by the smallpox, the measles, the cholera and other maladies, as well as their incessant wars and divisions, I think I may repeat the melancholy foresight that, in a few years, there will remain but very feeble vestiges of those tribes in the reserves guaranteed to them by the late treaties.[7] At this moment the agents continue to make new treaties, by which the Government proposes to purchase the lands of the Osages, Potawatomies and several other tribes.

Since the discovery of America the system of removing and of exiling the Indians farther inland or in the interior, has been assiduously exercised by the whites in this portion of the continent. In the early times, they went by slow degrees; but as the European colonies multiplied and increased in power, the system has been pushed with more vigor. At present, this same policy marches with gigantic steps. Resistance on the part of the natives could but hasten their ruin. The drama of population reaches its last scene at the east and west bases of the Rocky Mountains. In a few years the curtain will fall over the Indian tribes and veil them forever. They will live only in history. The whites continue to spread like a torrent over California, over Washington, Utah and Oregon; over the States of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Texas and New Mexico; and lastly, over Kansas and Nebraska.[8]

Within a recent period, and since I have resided in America, all these States and these Territories were still the exclusive domain of the Indians. As the whites settle and multiply in them, the Indians disappear and seem to die out. The immense regions that I have just named include several millions of square miles.

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[7] To this point the answers to the foregoing questions and the comments thereon are taken literally from letters dated February 16, 1852, and October 28, 1854, written by John Haverty of St. Louis, to whom Father De Smet had submitted the questions for an expression of opinion.

[8] On the 1st of August, 1854, in the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska, there was not a town or village of whites. On the 30th of December, of the same year, thirty or forty sites had been chosen for building villages and towns without delay. Labor was begun at many points; houses are building, farms laid out. All is life and activity in these virgin territories.—*Author's Note.*

Father Felix Martin wrote me recently from Canada: "The Indian missions are reduced almost to nothing. They follow in the train of those sad tribes which are no more what they once were. It is like a body which gradually sinks in itself. It is losing its grandeur, its force, its primitive forms. They have lost the character of nations; they are individualities, with some ancient traditions, and even these traces are gradually becoming effaced."

If the poor and unfortunate inhabitants of the Indian Territory were treated with more justice and good faith, they would cause little trouble. They complain, and doubtless, justly, of the dishonesty of the whites. These banish them from their native soil, from the tombs of their fathers, to which they are devotedly attached, and from their ancient hunting and fishing grounds: they must consequently seek elsewhere what is wrested from them, and build their cabins in another and a strange clime. But they are scarcely at ease in their new abode when they are removed a second and third time. With each successive emigration, they find their grounds restricted, their hunts and fishing places less abundant. Yet in all the treaties the agents promise them, on the part of the President, whom they call their Great Father, protection and privileges that are never realized. Is it therefore astonishing that the savages give the whites the name of forked tongues, or liars? They say that the whites "walk in crooked paths to attain their objects;" that their declarations of friendship, all beautiful and favorable as they appear, "never entered their hearts," and pass, ever with the same facility, "from the end of the tongue;" that they approach the Indian, "a smile on their lips," take him by the hand, to deceive him more easily, inebriate him and corrupt his children. "Like serpents," said Black Hawk, in his famous speech, "they have glided in among us; they have taken possession of our hearth-stones. The opossum and the deer have disappeared at their approach. We are overwhelmed with misery. The very contact of the whites has poisoned us."

These complaints and lamentations have been a thousand times repeated, in vain, in the speeches of the Indian orators, when the agents of the United States Government endeavor to make propositions for the purchase of their lands. A feeble ray of hope for the preservation of a great number of Indians is left, if the law proposed by Senator Johnson is adopted in sincerity on both sides, by the Government and by the Indians. Mr. Johnson proposes to establish three territorial governments in the Indian Territory inhabited by the Choctaws, Creeks, Cherokees, Chickasaws and other tribes, with the provision of being admitted later as distinct members of the confederated United States. On the 25th of last November, Harkins, chief among the Choctaws, addressed a speech on this subject to his nation, assembled in council. Among other things, he said to them: "I appeal to you, what will become of us if we reject the proposition of Senator Johnson? Can we hope to remain a people, always separate and distinct? This is not possible. The time must come; yes, the time is approaching, in which we shall be swallowed up; and that, notwithstanding our just claims! I speak boldly. It is a fact; our days of peace and happiness are gone, and forever. No opposition, on our part, can ever arrest the march of the United States toward grandeur and power, nor hinder the entire occupation of the vast American continent. We have no power nor influence over the most minute project of this Government. It looks upon and considers us in the light of little children, as pupils under its tutelage and protection; it does with us as seems to it good. Can the Choctaws change the face of things? If the desire of life is not extinct in our hearts; if we would preserve among us the rights of a people, one sole means remains to us: it is to instruct and civilize the youth, promptly and efficaciously. The day of fraternity has arrived. We must act together, and by common consent. Let us attentively consider our critical situation, and the course now left us. One false step may prove fatal to our existence as a nation. I therefore propose that the council take this subject into consideration, and that a committee be named by it to discuss and deliberate on the advantages and disadvantages of the proposition made to the Choctaws. Is it just and wise for the Choctaws to refuse a liberal and favorable offer, and expose themselves to the destiny of the Indians of Nebraska?"

According to news received recently, through a journal published in the Indian country, the speech of the chief has produced a profound impression, and was loudly applauded by all the counselors. All the intelligent Choctaws approve the measure. The Protestant missionaries oppose the bill, and employ all their artifices and influence to prevent its success. Harkins proposes their expulsion. "It is our money," said he, "that these mercenaries come here to get. Surely, our money can get us better teachers. Let us therefore try to procure good missionaries, with whom we can live in harmony and good understanding; who will give us the assurance that their doctrine is based on that of the apostles and of Jesus Christ."

The Chickasaws are represented as opposed to Senator Johnson's measure. We trust, however, that the vote of the majority will prove favorable, and that the three territorial States will be established. It is, in my opinion, a last attempt and a last chance of existence for the sad remnants of the poor Indians of America.

It is, I will say, if I may here repeat what I wrote in my second letter in 1853, their only remaining source of happiness: humanity and justice seem to demand it. If they are again repulsed and driven inland, they will infallibly perish. Such as refuse to submit, and accept the definitive arrangement, the only favorable one left, must resume the nomad life of the prairies, and close their career with the vanishing buffalo and other animals.

I have the honor to be, etc.

Life, Letters and Travels of
Father De Smet among the
North American Indians.

REV. PIERRE-JEAN DE SMET, S. J.

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LIFE, LETTERS AND TRAVELS

OF

FATHER PIERRE-JEAN DE SMET, S. J.

1801-1878

Missionary Labors and Adventures among the Wild Tribes of the
North American Indians, Embracing Minute Description of Their
Manners, Customs, Games, Modes of Warfare and Torture,
Legends, Tradition, etc., All from Personal Observations
Made during Many Thousand Miles of Travel,
with Sketches of the Country from St. Louis
to Puget Sound and the Altrabasca

*Edited from the original unpublished manuscript Journals
and Letter Books and from his Printed Works with
Historical, Geographical, Ethnological and other Notes;
Also a Life of Father De Smet*

MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

HIRAM MARTIN CHITTENDEN
Major, Corps of Engineers, U. S. A.
AND
ALFRED TALBOT RICHARDSON

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I SEE more plainly every day that a good store of virtue is required, and the assistance of many prayers, to overcome the difficulties and obstacles which seem to multiply with our efforts to advance the greater glory of God. The demon does not sleep, and seeing that some portion of his prey is escaping him, "*tanquam leo rugiens circuit, quærens quem devoret.*" He employs all his snares and ruses to attach his devotees to their infamous debauches, and to the grossest superstitions. If a baptized child dies, the medicine men, true ministers of Satan, put the whole village in uproar to make us the cause of its death. "It is the medicine (the water of baptism) that they poured on his forehead; it is the medal or cross that they have hung around his neck, and nothing else, that have caused his death." By such speeches they increase the fears of these poor people.

Marriage also, which hampers them, and the prevalent practice of polygamy, form powerful obstacles to their conversion. The Indian is naturally light and inconstant; consequently to attach himself for life to a woman, and have but the one, seems to him impossible and insupportable. I should explain further that marriage is a species of speculation with them; a father who has several daughters is rich among the Indians, for he can sell them for one, two

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[1] Extract from a letter (in French) to the Father-General (in 1839?).

or three horses each. Frequently, after they have followed and relished our instructions for a long time, as soon as we touch upon this article they go away, like the disciples of the Lord, saying, "*Durus est hic sermo, et quis potest eum audire?*" and we have the grief of seeing persons escape us, who, in all other respects, were giving us great hopes.

A still greater obstacle, and one which will, I fear, end in the total ruin of the nation, is drink; which brings in its train war, famine and pestilence, all together. The country is overrun by vagabond Americans; and the Government, which alone could put a stop to this abominable traffic, in spite of the severity of its laws, pays no attention to the matter. The Potawatomies, by their treaty with the Government, receive $50,000 per annum; this payment having been omitted last year, they received double in 1839. Such a sum, well placed, would procure for the savages victuals and goods in abundance, and would render them happy in regard to temporal things. But alas! all this money goes for liquor. As long as it lasts they neither work nor hunt; and they now have enough to keep them going from New Year's day to the end of December. They quarrel and fight from morning to night; their bodies become veritable furnaces, full of foul humors, which cause them all sorts of maladies. Their love for liquor is really inconceivable; one must see it to be able to form any idea of the thing. It is a regular tarantula to them; as soon as they are bitten by it, all their blood flames in their veins, and they are crazy for more. If they get it, "More, more!" is their war-cry, until, as the flame consumes them, they fall over, drunk, like animals. And when the fumes of drink evaporate from their brains, their first and only cry is "Whisky! whisky! whisky!" as if it was a matter of life and death.

While they are drunk, their passions control them absolutely. At first they are moved to joyous songs, but these are soon succeeded by yells and roars. Disputes and quarrels follow, and then the knives, lances and tomahawks come out, and murders finally crown their abominable orgies. A great many are dead already, and others are horribly mutilated. The other day I counted nine bitten-off noses in a single group of Indians. In their rage, this little member is the principal object of their attack; and a drunken Indian who deprives a comrade of his nose, boasts of it as much as a brave soldier of having carried off a flag from the enemy. When they are sober, no one would recognize them; they are mild, civil, quiet and attentive; but there is no safety in the presence of a drunken savage. Several times already our lives have been in the greatest danger; but fortunately by gentle and moderate words we have managed to appease the rage of these barbarous drunkards, who were breathing only blood.

Sept. 30, 1852.

MR. DENIG, *Fort Union:*

My Dear Friend.— At my return home this evening, I found a card in the parlor with the well-known name of our good friend Mr. Culbertson, and understood at the same time that he is to leave on to-morrow for the Upper Missouri. I cannot let him start without charging him with a few lines for you. I do not know how to express my gratitude for your very interesting series of narratives concerning the aborigines of the Far West. A thousand thanks are due to your precious and valuable labor and are hereby given, though language fails to express the feeling which a treasure like your pages has awakened within my breast. Nothing could be more gratifying to me than the beautiful and graphic details which you have given me of the religion, manners, customs and transactions of an unfortunate race of human beings, toward the amelioration of whose sad condition I have in some measure contributed *and am still anxious to contribute whatever I possibly can.* Please read these sublined words to the Crazy Bear, whose speech has wonderfully pleased me and whose petition, were it to depend on me, I would most assuredly grant. Explain this well to him. By the next steamer he shall hear from me, and I shall send him the words of the big Black-robe (the Bishop), for I have forwarded a copy of his speech to him.

The lot of the Indian; his severance from the hallowed influences of Christian civilization; his profound ignorance, only exceeded by his grosser superstitions; the deep and often unmerited contempt, into which prejudice has thrown him; all call upon the humane and philanthropic to do for him what ordinary charity requires of man.

In telling his tale in unvarnished colors to the unknowing world by delineating his character and by painting the scenes with which he is habitually surrounded, you, dear friend, will soften into sympathy the public heart and stimulate it to active exertion for bettering his future situation; and you will further awaken an interest in the circumstances and events which surround the posts, plains and wigwams of the Indians.

Think that your researches can be spent most profitably to the Indian and most agreeably to me. Show me this acknowledgment, for your beautiful manuscript tells me that I may claim a large share in your friendship and remembrance, and for which I feel truly grateful to you. You are filling up the broken, but important, history of a race of men whose career, I deem, is well nigh run on this continent, but whose character, deeds and fate will increase in interest as generations descend the stream of time. We shall soon look in vain for the survivors of a once fierce and dreaded people, but shall find them again on the historic page which you and others shall have helped to swell with faithful accounts of their savage life, rude customs and untutored manners. I have read the present series with absorbing attention and growing interest. My imagination has often carried me back to scenes long familiar to my experience and to others of a general and kindred nature which your pen has so well portrayed, in your valuable descriptions of their religious opinions, of their great buffalo hunt, their war expeditions, and in the histories of old Gauché and of the family of Gros François.

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Mr. Culbertson will bring you all the news of the civilized world and a little remembrance from me, consisting of a couple of good razors and penknife.

Believe me to be, etc.

The Grattan Massacre.

Bardstown, Ky., April 17, 1855.

MY VERY DEAR GUSTAVE AND MARIE:

I have received your good letter of the 4th of October last in response to mine of September 12th. Thank you for it most sincerely. I cannot express to you how much good your letters, going into such details and so full of family news, do me. I shall keep them most carefully; I find only one fault with them — their dates are rather too far apart; let them be closer together, and I promise you, dear friends, to make it up to you. I rejoiced at the announcement of the birth of your first-born and I implore the Lord daily to keep him for you, for your mutual happiness and the consolation of your dear parents on both sides.

I told you in my last letter that I proposed to return to the desert in the course of this spring. That was sincerely my desire and I regret that serious difficulties have come up which compel me to put off my visits to the savages to more favorable times and circumstances. For you must know. that the grand and glorious Republic is going to appear on the stage of the great Indian desert to give a representation of the lovely fable of La Fontaine (always old and always new) of the Wolf and the Lamb. The moral is, "The wicked and the strong always find plenty of pretexts to oppress the innocent and the weak; and when they lack good reasons they have recourse to lies and calumnies." An unpardonable offense, it appears, has been committed in the eyes of our civilized people by the Indians. They had repaired, to the number of 2,000, to the appointed spot at the time fixed by the Government agent to receive their annuities and presents. They waited several days for the commissioner to arrive and in the meantime they ran out of provisions. Then a Mormon wagon-train, on its way to the Territory of Utah, came peaceably by the Indian camp. One of the party was dragging after him a lame cow hardly able to walk. A famished savage, out of pity for his wife and children, and perhaps, also, from compassion for the suffering animal, killed the cow and offered the Mormon double value for it in a horse or a mule.

Such an act with such an offer under such circumstances passes for very honest, very fair and very polite, in a wild country. Still the Mormon refused the proffered exchange and went and filed a complaint with the commandant of Fort Laramie, which is in the neighborhood. Like the wolf who leaped upon the lamb to devour it, crying: "I know very well that you all hate me, and *you* shall pay for the rest," the illustrious commandant straightway sent out a young officer with twenty soldiers armed to the teeth and with a cannon loaded with grapeshot. He was absolutely determined to capture the so-called robber and make an example of him. The savages were astonished at the menacing turn that the affair of the cow, so frivolously begun, had taken; they begged the officer to take one, two, three horses in exchange, a hundred times the value of the cow, if necessary. They wished at any price to "bury" the affair, as they express it; that is to arrange it peaceably and quietly, but without giving up to him their brother, innocent according to their code. The officer was inflexible, refused all offers; he must absolutely have his prisoner; and when the latter did not appear, he fired his cannon into the midst of the savages. The head chief, whom I knew well, the noblest heart of his nation, fell mortally wounded and a number of his braves beside him. At this unexpected massacre the Indians sprang to arms; and letting fly hundreds of arrows from all sides they instantly annihilated the aggressors and provocators. Will you in Europe believe this tale of a cow? And yet such is the origin of a fresh war of extermination upon the Indians which is to be carried out in the course of the present year. An army of 3,000 to 4,000 men is being got ready in Missouri at this moment to penetrate into the desert. A very large number of whites will lose their lives without a doubt, but in the end the savages will have to yield, for they are without fire-arms, without powder and lead and without provisions.[3]

Since the discovery of America a system of extermination, of moving the Indians, thrusting them farther back, has been pursued and practiced by the whites, little by little, at first — more and more as the European settlers multiplied and gained strength. At this day this same policy is marching with giant strides; the drama of spoliation has reached its last act, both east and west of the Rocky Mountains. The curtain will soon fall upon the poor and unhappy remnants of the Indian tribes, and they will henceforth exist only in history. The whites are spreading like torrents over all California and the Territories of Washington, Utah and Oregon; over the States of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Texas, and New Mexico, and latterly over Kansas and Nebraska, which have just been incorporated into the great American confederation. At a very recent epoch, within my own knowledge, all these first-named States and Territories were occupied by Indian nations, and just as fast as the whites settle and multiply there the natives disappear and seem to fade away. To-day the very names are hardly known of hundreds of tribes that have entirely disappeared. The immense regions that I have just named contain several million square miles of land. The Territories of Kansas and Nebraska alone are forty times as large as all Belgium.

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[3] This is what is known as the Grattan Massacre, from the name of the officer in charge of the detachment sent after the thief. There is no doubt that the Indians were already in bad temper over their general situation before this incident occurred, and that it required but little provocation to make trouble. But the unfortunate affair could probably have been prevented if the commanding officer at Fort Laramie had understood the gravity of his action and had sent an officer of sound judgment and experience. The conduct of Lieutenant Grattan showed him to be lacking in both these qualities. The massacre took place August 19, 1854.

A little over a year later, September 3, 1855, General Harney, who had been sent out with a military force to punish these Indians, met them in battle on the north shore of the north fork of the Platte opposite the place known on the Oregon Trail as Ash Hollow. The Indians were completely defeated. General Harney then went overland to Fort Pierre where he succeeded in bringing about a general pacification of the tribes.

When I began this letter I had no idea of saying so much about the savages, which can be of very little interest to you. I speak, no doubt, from the abundance of my heart — it is my favorite subject — and most willingly would I consecrate the remnant of my days to their spiritual and temporal happiness. I recommend them most urgently to your good prayers.

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St. Louis University, September 7, 1868.

Dear Colonel:

Your kind and most welcome favor of the 8th ultimo was received yesterday and has afforded me a great deal of pleasure and consolation to be remembered by you. Major Galpin called thrice on me during his stay in St. Louis. He kept very busy all the time. I occasionally visited his wife and children at the hotel. They enjoyed good health but seemed to prefer Fort Rice. The major gave me all the news from Fort Rice and mentioned you often. I introduced him to General Sherman with whom he had long conversations. He met General Harney at the Southern Hotel. I did not see the major before his departure from

St. Louis, and was informed by Captain Haney that he was hurried off to Sioux City, by a telegram from Harney. I recommended the major in strong terms to both generals. I hope he has found some honorable employment and in accordance with his wishes. His long experience among the Indians might make him a very efficient man, and with the co-operation of his good wife, he might render great service to the Indians, particularly the hostiles, under the existing circumstances. It is my candid opinion that he may be very favorably employed and to very good purpose, by the commissioners and the commanding officers at the various upper posts on the Missouri.

The news you give me from my adopted brother Two Bears, truly affects me and I am sorry to hear of the distress and sufferings of his people. The advice you have given him is the only true one. His actual trials should not make him despond and omit his prayers. He should rather redouble in fervor and pray oftener, doing all the good he can among his own people, to keep them in the straight path. Trials received with patience and resignation will render us more pleasing in the sight of the Great Spirit and more worthy of receiving his favors and assistance, whereas murmurs make things often worse than before. As you so well advised him, he should continue to pray, be industrious in hunting, fishing and digging roots. He must, meanwhile, rely on the kind providence of the Lord, on whom our dependence must rest altogether. I join him daily in my poor supplications to God.

What I have foreseen for several years past is now approaching. The buffalo are fast disappearing from the country and their time is well-nigh spent. Their want is already severely felt. Under these trying circumstances, the Great Spirit has moved the heart of their Great Father, the President, to lend his red children a fatherly hand in their actual sufferings. They must avail themselves earnestly of the opportunity he offers and follow the advice given them by the commissioners. They must set to work in due season in the cultivation of the soil and the raising of domestic cattle and animals. Under the providence of God, it is to be hoped that their labors will prove successful in time, and before long their children may live in comparative abundance, by the labor of their own hands. Our great maxim in all things must be: "To do what we can, to ask God's blessing in what we cannot, and if we are deserving, the Lord will help us in our need." He commands us to "ask" and promises "we shall receive." All this, of course, is intended for my friend Two Bears. I hope Frank will make him understand it well. He may add that the actual want the Lord permits may be a warning to his red children to make strong exertions and efforts to succeed in the new life they are about entering. I place great confidence in my brother and friend Two Bears. He will tell his people, particularly the chiefs and orators, not to despond, to have courage and hope in the future. Industry and perseverance must crown their efforts. I remain truly attached to my red children of the upper country. The summer has been very severe and long. I have suffered much, and though it is much cooler at present, I still continue to feel the effects of the previous heat. Should my health permit, I intend to return to the upper country in the course of next spring. I have received some encouragement for the erection of a mission among the Sioux and I sincerely hope that it may be realized.

From the news I read yesterday, in the *Missouri Republic,* the Sioux on the waters of the Platte and its tributaries have refused to join the Cheyennes and Arapahos in the new depredations and murders. I have been assured, on good authority, that reckless endeavors are made in the new western settlements to continue the war with the Indians. "It brings them money in abundance, and they are determined to have it!"

A letter from you, dear Colonel, will be always most welcome. Please present my best respects to the officers of Fort Rice.

St. Louis University, May, 1870.

Honorable Sir:[a]

I received your favor of the 27th ultimo. Permit me to express to you my sincere thanks for the kind sentiments you entertain in my regard and which I shall ever gratefully remember. You reiterate to me the invitation, in the name of the "Honorable Committee of the United States Indian Commission" to assist at your meetings in New York on the 18th instant. Even apart from the great honor you are pleased to confer on me, nothing could be more pleasing to my personal feelings than to be admitted in the presence and at the deliberations of the most highly esteemed gentlemen of the country to whom the administration has confided in its wisdom the important Indian question as to the future welfare of the remaining Indian tribes. I stated in my previous letter that my health is rather declining, and must add that my hearing, particularly, is failing fast and makes my presence in meetings rather unpleasant. Besides, the invitations I have received from the Upper Sioux Indians and the promises I have made to them, if in my power to comply with their requests, make me humbly decline your very kind and honorable invitation, for which please receive again my sincere and heartfelt thanks.

You do me the honor to ask me some account as to my personal experience among the Indians and my conviction as to their capacity for civilization and receiving religious instruction, etc. Though pressed for time, I take great pleasure in reviewing some of my early experience among the Indian tribes, accompanied with a few simple illustrative occurrences, showing the Indian character in its primitive nature where it had remained uncontaminated by the contact of vicious whites.

You allude in your letter to the anecdote I related to the honorable commissioners at Fort Leavenworth (1868) to wit: to the chapel trunk I had left among the Rocky Mountain tribes at my departure from them, as an assurance of my promise to return to the mountains. For nearly a year they had carried it with the greatest care in all their expeditions and returned it to me intact and in the best state of preservation. I may here add a short statement of what occasioned my visit to these Indians. The Rocky Mountain tribes, Flatheads, Kalispels, Cœur d'Alènes, Kootenais and others had heard of the Savior and of his holy laws to mankind, by means of a few Christian Iroquois from Canada who had come to the mountains as engagés of the Hudson Bay Company, and who had finally settled among the above tribes. They had aroused the minds of the mountain Indians with a religious feeling to which they had been hitherto strangers, and in a council they resolved to send a deputation to St. Louis of some of their wisest men, to obtain Black-robes (priests) from the Bishop. I always looked upon it as a particular favor to have been appointed to accompany this deputation and with pleasure I can bear witness, that during the long and tedious traveling at that time (1840) their conduct toward me was one continued act of kindness and of attention.

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[a] Letter to Hon. S. F. Tappan.

After some two or three months' travel to the appointed rendezvous in the plains of the Green river, we met great numbers of the above-mentioned tribes who had come hundreds of miles from their habitual hunting grounds to meet us and welcome us to their country. Their kindness, attention and zeal exceeded my expectations. From the very start of my missionary operations they listened with the utmost anxiety and earnestness to the holy word of God and put in practice immediately what they were made to understand. In this first visit I remained with the Indians about three months. They daily attended at the morning and evening prayers and instructions, which holy practice, as I learn, has never been discontinued among them. They keep the Lord's day in the highest veneration. As soon as it became practicable they abandoned polygamy and without the least ill will or trouble. I always remarked great love and attachment of the parents toward their children, great regard for each other, for quarrels were of the rarest occurrence and no stranger could come amongst them without meeting with a kind reception and finding hospitality. They were strictly honest toward one another and likewise toward strangers. Even any object found was carefully remitted to the chief, who proclaimed it aloud at the camping place to return it to the owner. My mission-house was of necessity often left alone, but nothing was ever missed. My friends, the Kootenais, had a trading post on their lands provided with goods for their use. The trader (Mr. Berton) was sometimes absent for weeks or months. The Indians went in and served themselves according to their wants; replaced in furs and skins for the goods taken out; and upon the testimony of the trader (I use his words), "his confidence in their honesty was never abused." Their moral conduct was admirable and commendable. Every attempt at seduction, either by young men or by adults, was punished with a severe flogging. During my several years' intercourse and experience with these mountain Indians, I never heard of an adulterer.

I had an adopted Indian brother, named Moses, surnamed The Brave of the Braves. His exemplary conduct took pace with his renowned bravery and he was generally looked up to and esteemed. I was with him when he called upon the chief who had just performed his duty after his morning prayer and as justice of peace in flogging a guilty young Nez Percé, who had recently arrived amongst them and was ignorant of their laws and customs. Moses took off his buffalo robe, exposed his bare back, shook hands with the judge, and stipulated, himself, to receive twenty-five well-laid-down lashes. I here interposed and inquired into the motive and cause of his action. He answered me with a smile, equally admirable for his simplicity and sincerity: "Father, the Nez Percé here present was whipped because he talked foolishly to a girl. My thoughts are sometimes bewildering and vexing and I have prayed to drive them from my mind and heart." I consoled him with a few words of advice and encouraged him to persevere manfully in the service of the Great Spirit, who would have pity on him and help him in his tribulations, and he was not flogged.

As to agriculture and other manual-labor work, it was easily introduced amongst them and they set joyfully to work as far as the few plows and other instruments we had would allow them. Each family had its field of weed [wheat?] and its garden of vegetables. Each mission was provided with a mill and carpenter and blacksmith shops.

I might here adduce many more characteristic traits of the mountain Indians. I shall rejoice if I have not exceeded the limit of my letter and if, in any way, I have come up to your intention and expectation in these somewhat hurriedly written pages. Please accept my good will in what I have the honor to address to you, with my best wishes and prayers in the deliberations you are about to assume for the welfare of the Indian tribes.

Permit me to add the following testimonies, confirming what I have said of the religious dispositions of the mountain Indians. In the Explorations and Surveys (of Governor Stevens) for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, Vol. 1, page 308, Captain John Mullan, of said expedition, writes, September 14, 1853: "When the guide and myself had reached their camp (Flathead) three or four men met us at the entrance and invited us to enter the lodge of their chief. They very kindly took care of our horses, unsaddling and watering them. As soon as the camp had heard of the arrival of a white man among them, the principal men of the tribe congregated in the lodge of the chief. When they had all assembled, by a signal from their chief they offered up a prayer. This astonished me, it was something for which I had not been prepared. Every one was upon his knees, and in the most solemn and reverential manner offered up a prayer to God. For a moment I asked myself, was I among Indians? Was I among those termed by every one savages? I could scarcely realize it. To think that these men should be thus imbued, and so deeply too, with the principles of religion, was to me overwhelming."

From the late (1869) Report of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior I take an extract from McConley's letter, U. S. Indian Agent, page 254, speaking of the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles, says: "These people possess strong religious feelings as the well-filled and commodious church of the Reverend Fathers of St. Ignatius' Mission on every Sabbath testifies. The missionary labors of the Reverend Fathers have not been in vain, for many of them are exemplary Christians. I may here remark that the labors of the Reverend Fathers have been very arduous and difficult. Poor and unaided, they have established their mission, built their church and school, and maintained themselves solely by their own exertion. Not only this, but they have been, at the same time, priest, physician and benefactor to these tribes. * * * Still more, in conjunction with the noble Sisters of Charity they educate, clothe and feed the orphans of these tribes without fee or reward. * * * Without their aid and influence, the wrongs inflicted upon these people would long since have driven them to war."

I give the above extract of McConley to draw your attention to these missions and take the liberty of recommending them to you, should the opportunity present itself.

I have visited and traveled among most of the Indian tribes of the upper Missouri river and its tributaries and plains, during the space of about thirty years. I am happy to be able to bear testimony that I have been on all occasions kindly received and entertained by them and have ever found them attentive to religious instruction. It is my candid opinion that much good might have been, and can still be, effected among the Indians, if they are properly and justly dealt with by the whites.

PART VIII.

MISSIONARY WORK AMONG THE INDIANS.

(When not otherwise noted, the letters in this part are here published for the first time.)

CHAPTER I.

THE FLATHEAD AND OTHER MISSIONS.[1]

The Kalispel church — Virtues of Standing Grizzly — Victor and Insula — Beginning of present St. Ignatius Mission — American and European savages — Indian uprising feared — Object to parting with their lands — The little news of a remote mission.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels:

University of St. Louis, April, 1856.

Reverend and Dear Father:

I INCLOSE you a letter of Reverend Adrian Hoeken, brother of Christian, whose death you announced in your volume of 1853, page 394.

Father Adrian Hoeken was one of my earliest traveling companions in the missionary journeys to the Flatheads. He has ever labored, and still continues to labor here, with the greatest zeal and the most plentiful results.

I have this month dispatched a perfect cargo to him, by a steamer which was about to ascend the Missouri. It consisted of tools, clothes and provisions of all kinds. The boat will go 2,200 miles; then the goods will be transported by a barge, which will have to stem the rapid current about 600 miles; there will then remain 300 miles by land with wagons, through mountain defiles; so that the objects shipped in April can arrive among the Flatheads only in the month of October.

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[1] From *Western Missions and Missionaries*, p. 295.

We hope that other evangelical laborers will soon go to assist Father Hoeken. The savages request missionaries. We shall perceive that this mission and that of the Pend d'Oreilles continue to flourish.

"Flathead Camp in the Blackfeet Country, Oct. 18, 1855.

Reverend and Dear Father:

"You will thank God with me for the consoling increase he has given, through the intercession of Mary, to the missions which you began in those remote parts. During the many years that I have passed among the Kalispels, though my labors have not been light and my trials have been numerous enough, God has given me in abundance the consolations of the missionary, in the lively faith and sincere piety of our neophytes. We have found means to build a beautiful church, which has excited the admiration of even Lieutenant Mullan, of the United States army. This church is sufficiently large to contain the whole tribe, and on Sundays and festival days, when our Indians have adorned it with what ornaments of green boughs and wild flowers the woods and prairies supply; when they sing in it their devout hymns with fervor during the holy sacrifice, it might serve as a subject of edification and an example to quicken the zeal of many an old Christian congregation. There is among our converts a universal and very tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, a most evident mark that the faith has taken deep root in their souls. Every day, morning and evening, the families assemble in their lodges to recite the rosary in common, and daily they beg of Mary to thank God for them for having called them from the wild life of the forest, spent as it is in ignorance, rapine and bloodshed, to the blessings of the true religion and its immortal hopes.

"The Kalispels have sustained a great loss in the death of their pious chief, Loyola, with whose euphonious Indian name, *Etsowish-simmègee-itshin,* "Standing Grizzly," you are familiar. Ever since you baptized this excellent Indian chieftain, he was always steadfast in the faith. He daily made progress in virtue and became more fervent in the practices of our holy religion. He was a father to his people, firm in repressing their disorders and zealous in exhorting them to be faithful to the lessons of the missionaries. In the severe trials to which divine Providence subjected his virtue in his latter years, when within a short space of time he lost his wife and three of his children, he bore the heavy stroke with the edifying resignation of a Christian. During his last illness, of several weeks' duration, he seemed more anxious to do something still for the promotion of piety among his people, than to have his own great sufferings alleviated. His death, which occurred on the 6th of April, 1854, was lamented by the Indians with such tokens of sincere grief as I have never before witnessed. There was not that false wailing over his tomb which Indian usage is said to prescribe for a departed chieftain; they wept over him with heartfelt and heartrending grief, as if each one had lost the best of fathers, and their grief for the good Loyola has not died away even at this day. Never had I thought our Indians capable of so much affection.

"As Loyola, contrary to Indian customs, had not designated his successor, a new chief was to be chosen after his death. The election, to which all had prepared themselves by prayer, to lead them to a proper choice, ended in an almost unanimous voice for Victor, a brave hunter, whom you as yet must remember as a man remarkable for the generosity of his disposition. His inauguration took place amid great rejoicing. All the warriors, in their finest costumes, marched to his wigwam, and ranging themselves around it, discharged their muskets, after which each one went up to him to pledge his allegiance and testify his affection by a hearty shaking of hands. During the whole day, numerous parties came to the mission-house to tell the Fathers how much satisfaction they felt at having a chief whose goodness had long since won the hearts of all. Victor alone seemed sad. He dreaded the responsibility of the chieftainship, and thought he should be unable to maintain the good effected in the tribe by the excellent chief Loyola.

"In the following winter, when there was a great scarcity, and almost a famine among the Kalispels, Victor gave an affecting proof of his generous self-denying charity. He distributed his own provisions through the camp, hardly reserving for himself enough to sustain life, so that on his return from the annual chase, when yet at a considerable distance from the village, he fell exhausted on the ground, and had to be carried by his companions, to whom on that very day he had given all the food that had been sent up to him for his own use.

"The Indian is often described as a being devoid of kind feelings, incapable of gratitude, and breathing only savage hatred and murderous revenge; but in reality he has, in his untamed, uncultured nature, as many generous impulses as the man of any other race, and he only needs the softening influence of our holy religion to bring it out in its most touching forms. We need no other proof of it than the grateful remembrance of all the Indians of their late chief Loyola, the generous character of Victor, and the affectionate feelings of all our converted tribes for their missionaries, and especially for you, to whom they look up as to their great benefactor, because you were the first to bring them the good tidings of salvation.

"Among our dear Flatheads, Michael Insula, or Red Feather, or as he is commonly called on account of his small stature, 'The Little Chief,' is a remarkable instance of the power which the Church has of developing the most amiable virtues in the fierce Indian. He unites in his person the greatest bravery with the tenderest piety and gentlest manners. Known amid his warriors by the red feather which he wears, his approach is enough to put to flight the prowling bands of Crows and Blackfeet, that have frequently infested the Flathead territory. He is well known and much beloved by the whites, who have had occasion to deal with him, as a man of sound judgment, strict integrity, and one on whose fidelity they can implicitly rely. A keen discerner of the characters of men, he loves to speak especially of those whites, distinguished for their fine qualities, that have visited him, and often mentions with pleasure the sojourn among them of Colonel Robert Campbell, of St. Louis, and of Major Fitzpatrick, whom he adopted, in accordance with Indian ideas of courtesy, as his brothers. He has preserved all his first fervor of devotion, and now, as when you knew him, one can hardly ever enter his wigwam in the morning or evening without finding him with his rosary in his hands, absorbed in prayer. He cherishes a most affectionate remembrance of you and of the day he was baptized; he longs ardently to see you once more before his death, and but yesterday he asked me, when and by what road you would return. In speaking thus he expressed the desire of all our Indians, who all equally regret your long absence.

"It was proposed, during the summer of 1854, to begin a new mission[2] about 190 miles northeast of the Kalispels, not far from the Flathead lake, about fifty miles from the old mission of St. Mary's, among the Flatheads, where a convenient site had been pointed out to us by the Kalispel chief, Alexander, your old friend, who often accompanied you in your travels in the Rocky Mountains. Having set out from the Kalispel Mission on the 28th of August, 1854, I arrived at the place designated on the 24th of September, and found it such as it had been represented — a beautiful region, evidently fertile, uniting a useful as well as pleasing variety of woodland and prairie, lake and river — the whole crowned in the distance by the white summit of the mountains, and sufficiently rich withal in fish and game. I shall never forget the emotions of hope and fear that filled my heart, when for the first time I celebrated mass in this lonely spot, in the open air, in the presence of a numerous band of Kalispels, who looked up to me, under God, for their temporal and spiritual welfare in this new home. The place was utterly uninhabited — several bands of Indians live within a few days' travel, whom you formerly visited, and where you baptized many, while others still remain pagan. I was in hope of gathering these around me, and God has been pleased to bless an undertaking begun for his glory, even beyond my expectation. In a few weeks we had erected several frame buildings, a chapel, two houses, carpenter's and blacksmith's shops; wigwams had sprung up at the same time all around in considerable numbers, and morning and evening you might still have heard the sound of the axe and the hammer, and have seen newcomers rudely putting together lodges.

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[2] The present St. Ignatius, Montana.

"About Easter of this year, over 1,000 Indians of different tribes, from the Upper Kootenais and Flat-Bow Indians, Pend d'Oreilles, Flatheads, and Mountain Kalispels, who had arrived in succession during the winter, when they heard of the arrival of the long-desired Black-gown, made this place their permanent residence. All these Indians have manifested the best dispositions. Besides a large number of children baptized in the course of the year, I have had the happiness to baptize, before Christmas and Easter, upwards of 150 adults of the Kootenai tribe; men of great docility and artlessness of character, who told me that ever since you had been among them, some years ago, they had abandoned the practice of gambling and other vices, and cherished the hope of being instructed one day in the religion of the Great Spirit.

"By the beginning of spring, our good Brother McGean had cut some 18,000 rails; and placed under cultivation a large field, which promises to yield a very plentiful harvest. Lieutenant Mullan, who spent the winter among the Flatheads of St. Mary's, has procured me much valuable aid in founding this mission, and has all along taken a lively interest in its prosperity. I know not how to acquit the debt of gratitude I owe this most excellent officer, and I can only pray, poor missionary as I am, that the Lord may repay his generosity and kindness a hundredfold in blessings of time and eternity. We are still in want of a great many useful and important articles — indeed, of an absolute necessity in the establishing of this new mission. I am confident, many friends of the poor Indians may be found in the United States, who will most willingly contribute their mite in such a charitable undertaking — we will be most grateful to them, and our good neophytes, in whose behalf I make the appeal, will not cease to pray for their kind benefactors.

"Please make arrangements with the American Fur Company to have goods brought up by the Missouri river to Fort Benton, whence I could get them conveyed in wagons across the mountains to the missionary station.

"The Right Reverend Magloire Blanchet, Bishop of Nisqually, who in his first visit to the Mission of St. Ignatius near Lake De Boey, confirmed over 600 Indians, although he arrived unexpectedly, when a great many families had gone to their hunting grounds, among the Kalispels and our neighboring missions, intended to give confirmation here this summer. I was very desirous of the arrival of this pious prelate, who has done so much good, by his fervent exhortations, to strengthen our neophytes in the faith. It had already been agreed upon that a party of Indians should go to meet him as far as the village of the Sacred Heart, among the Cœur d'Alènes, about 200 miles from St. Ignatius' Mission, when our plans were broken up by a message from Governor Stevens, summoning all our Indians to a council to be held some thirty miles off, in St. Mary's or Bitter Root valley, at a place called Hellgate, whence a number of chiefs and warriors were to accompany him to a Grand Council of Peace among the Blackfeet. I was absent on a visit to our brethren among the Cœur d'Alènes, the Skoyelpis, and other tribes, when I received an invitation from the Governor to be present at the councils. I had found, in my visit, all our missions rich in good works and conversions, though very poor in the goods of this world — all the Fathers and Brothers were in the enjoyment of excellent health. Father Joset, among the Skoyelpis, at the Kettle Falls of the Columbia, had baptized a large number of adults and children. During the late prevalence of the smallpox, there were hardly any deaths from it among the neophytes, as most of them had been previously vaccinated by us, while the Spokans and other unconverted Indians, who said the 'medicine (vaccine) of the Fathers was a poison, used only to kill them,' were swept away by hundreds. This contrast, of course, had the effect of increasing the influence of the missionaries.

"With mingled feelings of joy at all the good effected, and of sorrow at the miserable death of so many of God's creatures — thankful to God for all his blessings, and submissive to the mysterious judgments of his Providence, I set out, accompanied by my neophytes, for the Blackfeet territory. The grand council took place in the vicinity of Fort Benton. Our Indians, who were in great expectation of seeing you with Majors Cummings and Culbertson, were indeed much disappointed at not finding you. The Blackfeet, although they are still much given to thieving and have committed more depredations than ever, during the last spring, are very anxious to see you again, and to have missionaries among them. Governor Stevens, who has always shown himself a real father and well affected toward our Indians, has expressed a determination to do all in his power to forward the success of the missions. The establishment of a mission among the Blackfeet would be the best, and indeed the only means to make them observe the treaty of peace which has just been concluded. Until missionaries are sent, I intend, from time to time, to visit the Blackfeet, so as to do for them what good I may, and prepare the way for the conversion of the whole tribe. I hope a new mission may soon be realized, for it is absolutely necessary, both for their own sake and for the peace of our converted Indians on the western side of the Rocky Mountains.

"From all I have seen, and from all I have learned during this last trip, I may say that the Crows and all the tribes on the upper waters of the Missouri, as well as the various bands of Blackfeet, where so many children have already been regenerated in the holy waters of baptism, by you and by Father Point, are anxious to have the Black-robes permanently among them, and to learn 'the prayer of the Great Spirit.' The field seems ripe for the harvest. Let us pray that God may soon send zealous laborers to this far-distant and abandoned region.

"The Kalispel chief Alexander, Michael Insula and the other Flathead chieftains, the leaders of the Kootenai and Flat-Bow bands, and all our neophytes, beg to be remembered in your good prayers — they, on their part, never forget to pray for you. Please remember me.

"Your devoted brother in Christ,

"ADRIAN HOEKEN, S. J."

The following extract from a letter of Reverend T. Congiato, superior of the Missions of the Society of Jesus in California and Oregon, written since the commencement of Indian hostilities, and dated Santa Clara, 29th of last November, will perhaps prove not uninteresting to those who take an interest in the success of our Catholic mission. Reverend T. Congiato writes:

"On my return from our missions among the Rocky Mountains, which it took me three months to visit, I found here a letter of yours full of edifying news, for which I am very thankful. Our college here is progressing. The number of members of our Society is on the increase, and reaches nearly forty. All over California, our holy religion is making great progress, and priests and churches are multiplying. In the Oregon missions our Fathers are doing much good. At the mountains Father Adrian Hoeken, a worthy brother of Father Christian Hoeken, the apostle and zealous missionary among the Potawatomies, who died in 1851, while on his way to the Upper Missouri tribes, has succeeded in bringing three nations and a part of the Flatheads to live under his spiritual guidance. Everything seemed to be going on well when I left Oregon, but now the country appears on fire. All the Indians living on the banks of the Columbia, from Walla Walla down to the Dalles Mountains, together with the Indians of North California, are in arms against the whites, and commit great depredations. One of the Father Oblates, Father Pandory, has been killed. Please pray, and make others pray for our brethren in Oregon. The last accounts I received from St. Paul's Mission, at Colville, stated that our Indians disapproved highly of the depredations committed by the other Indians, and showed no disposition whatever to join them."

It may, indeed, be confidently anticipated that the Indians of the Catholic missions of the mountains, who have always shown great kindness to the whites, and have always lived in peace with them, will continue to listen to the good counsel and advice of the missionaries, and will abstain from any act of hostility. Moreover, they are removed from the seat of war, and have seldom had any intercourse with the hostile tribes.

Most Respectfully, etc.

University of St. Louis, August 4, 1857.[1]

Reverend and Dear Father:

You will find inclosed in this letter a recent letter from Reverend Adrian Hoeken, S. J. I hope that it will merit a place in your *Précis Historiques*. In Holland I am sure it will afford pleasure.

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[1] To the editor of the *Précis Historiques*, Brussels. From *Western Missions and Missionaries*, p. 306.

The expression of the sentiments of the poor Indians in my regard fill me with confusion, and I would not have sent the letter entire, but that you insisted on my sending each piece entire. For the rest, we must never forget that these wretched Indians, deprived of everything, and neglected by other men, experience an excessive joy for the least benefit, and feel grateful to any one who treats them with a little attention. A great lesson for our fellow countrymen. Among those whom infidel and revolutionary writers in Belgium style *savages* and *barbarians*, you could not find one enough so to figure in the bands of Jemappes, or even in the rioters of Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent and Mons. Here the Black-gown is respected, loved. The Indians perceive in him the emblem of the happiness that the missionary brings him in presenting him the torch of faith.

Letter of Reverend Father Adrian Hoeken.

Mission of the Flatheads, April 15, 1857.

Reverend and Beloved Father:

Before entering into a few details, I beg you to excuse the want of order in this letter. Much time has elapsed since I had the pleasure of receiving news from you, who have so many titles to my love and gratitude, and whose name is frequently on the lips, and always in the hearts, of each of the inhabitants of this remote region. Your letter of the 27th and 28th of March reached us toward the end of August; it was read, or rather devoured, with avidity, so dear was it to our hearts. It was remitted to us by our chief, Alexander, who accompanied Mr. R. H. Lansdale to the Cœur d'Alênes. Scarcely had we cast a glance at the address and recognized your handwriting, than, not being able to contain our joy, all with one consent cried out: "Father De Smet! Father De Smet!" You cannot imagine the delight your letters afford us and our dear Indians. God be praised! Your name will be ever held in benediction among these poor children of the Rocky Mountains. Ah! how often they ask me these questions: "When, oh when! will Father De Smet come to us? Will he ever again ascend the Missouri? Is it true that he will not come to Fort Benton this fall?" These, and many other similar questions, show how dear to them is the remembrance of their father in Christ; of him who first broke to them the bread of eternal life, and showed them the true way to happiness on earth and bliss hereafter. It is not strange, then, that your letters should have been read several times, and that every time they gave us new pleasure and excited new interest.

I can never cease admiring Divine Providence, which presides over all, and which in particular takes care of our beloved missions. Among the unnumbered proofs of its continual protection, your assistance in our late distress, and the liberality of our benefactors, are not less remarkable nor less worthy of our gratitude. Our storehouses were empty, and the war between the Indians nearest the seaboard took away all hope of procuring other resources. Never, never was charity more appropriate nor received with greater joy. May heaven prolong your days and those of our benefactors! May you continue to foster the same interest toward us that, until the present moment, you have never ceased to testify! Yes, beloved father, let the recollection of our missions be ever equally dear to you. They are the fruit of your own heroic zeal, fatigues and labors. Ah! never forget our dear Indians; they are *your* children in Christ, the offspring of *your* boundless charity and your unwearied zeal!

During the months of June, July and August, disease raged cruelly in our camp, as well as in that of the Flatheads. However, there were few victims of its terrible attacks.

Father Ménétrey, my colaborer, visited the Flatheads, where he had been asked for by the chief, Fidelis Teltella (*Thunder*), whose son was dangerously ill. Later, I visited them myself in their camas prairies. A second time, in the opening of the month of June, I remained some days with them, at Hellgate, and I distributed medicines to all those who had been seized with the epidemic, and a little wheat flour to each family. Victor, the great chief, Ambrose, Moses, Fidelis, Adolphus, and several others, came here of their own accord, to fulfill their religious duties. Since last spring there has been a notable amelioration in the whole nation. Ambrose has effected the most good. He had convened several assemblies, in order to arrange and pay off old debts, to repair wrongs, etc. The Indians appear, however, very reluctant to part with their lands; they will scarcely hear of the dispositions to be taken.

Father Ravalli labored as much as he could to pacify the tribes which reside toward the west, namely: the Cayuses, the Yakimas, the Palooses, etc. As our neophytes hitherto have taken no part in the war, the country is as safe for us as ever. We can go freely wheresoever we desire. No one is ignorant that the Black-gowns are not enemies; those, at least, who are among the Indians. Almost all the Cœur d'Alènes, in order to shield themselves from the hostilities of the Indians, and to avoid all relations with them, are gone bison hunting. A few days since, Father Joset wrote me that Father Ravalli had already written to him several weeks before: "I fear a general rising among the Indians, toward the commencement of spring. Let us pray, and let us engage others to pray with us, in order to avert this calamity. I think that it would be well to add to the ordinary prayers of the mass, the collect for peace."

If the less well-intentioned Indians from the lower lands would keep within their own territory, and if the whites, the number of whom is daily augmenting in St. Mary's valley, could act with moderation, and conduct themselves prudently, I am convinced that soon the whole country would be at peace, and that not a single Indian would henceforward imbrue his hands in the blood of a white stranger. Were I authorized to suggest a plan, I would propose to have all the upper lands evacuated by the whites, and form of it a territory exclusively of Indians; afterward I would lead there all the Indians of the inferior portion, such as the Nez Percés, the Cayuses, the Yakimas, the Cœur d'Alènes and the Spokans. Well-known facts lead me to believe that this plan, with such superior advantages, might be effected, by means of missions, in the space of two or three years.

Our Indians here are doing well. Last spring we sowed about fifty bushels of wheat, and planted a quantity of potatoes, cabbages and turnips. God has graciously blessed our labors and our fields. Here all generally like agriculture. We give the seeds *gratis* to everybody. Our plows and our tools are also free to be used by them. We even lend our horses and oxen to the poorest among the Indians, and we grind all their grain gratuitously. But our mill, which goes by horse-power, is very small, and we are not able to build another.

Mr. R. H. Lansdale, agent of the Government, a very just and upright man, has assumed his functions at the Plumtrees, a place situated quite near the place where we cross the river, a few miles from this. We gave him all the assistance of which we were capable. I had indulged the hope that the Government would come to our aid, at least for the building of a small church; but so far my expectations have been frustrated. Alas! are we never to cease deploring the loss of our little church among the Kalispels? Several of these latter named, and among others, Victor, on seeing the chapel, formerly so dear to them, but now forsaken and neglected, shed tears of regret.

When, oh when! shall the oppressed Indian find a poor corner of earth on which he may lead a peaceful life, serving and loving his God in tranquillity, and preserving the ashes of his ancestors without fear of beholding them profaned and trampled beneath the feet of an unjust usurper?

Several among the Kalispels, Victor and others, already have possessions here. However, they have not yet renounced those which they own in the country lower down.

Twelve very poor habitations are the beginning of our town called St. Ignatius. Our little abode, although very modest, is sufficiently comfortable. To any other than you, this word *comfortable* might sound singular; but you, Reverend Father, who understand perfectly what it means when applied to a poor missionary, will comprehend the relative application of the word. Our community numbers six members. Father Joseph Ménétrey, who is missionary, prefect of our chapel, and inspector in chief of our fields, etc.; Brother McGean, farmer; Brother Vincent Magri, dispenser, carpenter and miller; Brother Joseph Specht, blacksmith, baker and gardener; Brother Francis Huybrechts, carpenter and sacristan.

I intend going to Colville after the harvest and during the absence of the Indians.

Father Ménétrey, of his own free will, went to Fort Benton with a pair of horses. The distance by the great road is 294 miles. He took horses because we could with difficulty spare our oxen, and also because, according to information received from Mr. Lansdale, the road is impassable to oxen which have not, like horses, iron shoes. Father Ménétrey arrived at the fort on the 17th of September, and was very favorably received by the occupants; but he was obliged to wait some time for the boats. He speaks with high eulogiums of the Blackfeet, and regrets that he has not jurisdiction in that part of the mountains. He returned on the 12th of November.

How express to you, Reverend Father, the joy that filled our hearts, when we opened your letters and the different cases which you had the charity to send us? We each and all wept with grateful joy! In vain, the night following, I strove to calm the emotions that these missives, as well as the liberality of our benefactors, had produced in my heart; I could not close my eyes. All the community, yes, the whole camp, participated in my delight. In unison we rendered thanks to Divine Providence, and that day was a perfect holiday. The next day, having a little recovered from my excitement, I was ashamed of my weakness. You who know what it is to be a missionary; you who know so well his privations, his trials, his pangs, you will easily forgive my excessive sensibility.

I had agreed with Father Congiato that he would send your Reverence my lists, as well as the money that he might allow me. I was bolder in soliciting your charity and your benevolence in our favor, because I knew the love and interest that you bear to our missions; and that, on the other hand, I only executed a plan that yourself had conceived and suggested, when, in consideration of the circumstances, it would have appeared to every one else illusory and incapable of execution.

Scarcely had Father Ménétrey gone than I received a letter from Father Congiato, in which he said to me: "If you think that your supplies can be furnished at a more reasonable price from Missouri, order them thence, I will pay the cost. Write on this subject to Reverend Father De Smet." Had I received this letter somewhat later, I scarcely know what would have been my decision; for it is very doubtful that we should have been able to find any one who would return to Fort Benton. I entreat you, be so good as to excuse the trouble that we give you; our extraordinary situation is the sole excuse that I can offer in favor of our importunity. A thousand thanks to you, and to all our benefactors who concurred so generously in the support of our missions. I also thank our kind brethren in St. Louis, for the very interesting letters that they had the kindness to write me. Receive, too, our grateful sentiments, Reverend Father, for the catalogues of the different provinces, the classical books, Shea's Catholic Missions, the works of controversy, etc., etc. I should never conclude did I attempt to enumerate all your gifts, which we were so overjoyed to receive. Brother Joseph was beside himself with gladness when his eyes fell on the little packages of seeds, the files, scissors and other similar objects. Accept, in fine, our thanks for the piece of broadcloth you sent us; by this favor we continue to be *Black-robes.* Ah! with my whole heart I wish that you could have seen us as we were opening the boxes. Each object excited new cries of joy and augmented our grateful love for the donors. All arrived in good order. The snuff had got a little mixed with the clover seed, but no matter; my nose is not very delicate. It is the first donation sent into these mountains, at least since I have been here. We bless God, who watches over all of his children with so much care and liberality, even over those who appear to be the most forsaken.

On the following day I sent Father Joset his letters. I found an opportunity that very day.

It would have been very agreeable to me to receive a copy of all your letters published since 1836. The portraits were very dear to me. I could not recognize Father Verdin's, but Brother Joseph knew it at the first glance. Yours was also recognized at once by a great number of the Indians, and on seeing it they shouted "Pikek an!"[4] It made the tour of the village, and yesterday again, an inhabitant of Kootenai came to me with the sole intention of "paying a visit to Father De Smet." This did them an immense good, only seeing the portrait of him who was the first to bear them the light of faith in these regions, still overshadowed with the darkness of moral death; and who first dissipated the mists in which they and their progenitors during untold ages had been enveloped. Believe me, Reverend Father, not a day passes, without their prayers ascending to heaven for you.

In what manner can we testify our gratitude in regard to the two benefactors who so generously charged themselves with the care of transporting and delivering to us our cases without consenting to accept the slightest recompense? Undoubtedly they will reap a large share in the sacrifices and prayers that daily rise to heaven for all our benefactors, and which are with a grateful heart and the remembrance of their beneficence toward us, the only tokens of our thankfulness that we can offer them. How noble the sentiment which prompted them gratuitously to burden themselves and their boats with the charitable gifts, destined by the faithful to the destitute missionaries of the Indians! Heaven, who knows our poverty, will reward them with better gifts than we could have imagined suitable to their liberality.

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[4] The venerable Father J. D'Aste, of St. Ignatius' Mission, thus explains this expression: "'Pikokan' means White Head, being composed of the word *ipik* (white) and the final *kan*, which in composition stands for 'head.' But there must be a mistake here, because when Father De Smet left the mountains forever, he had not yet white hair."

The package destined for Michael Insula, the "*Little Chief*," lies here for the present. He has not yet opened it. The good man is abroad on a hunting excursion; but we expect him back in a few days. I doubt not that he will be very sensible to these marks of friendship, or, as he usually expresses it, "these marks of fraternity." He set out from here, when he had harvested the grain he had sowed. Always equally good, equally happy, a fervent Christian, he is daily advancing in virtue and in perfection. He has a young son, Louis Michael, whom he teaches to call me *papa*. It is a real pleasure to him to be able to speak of your Reverence and of his two adopted brothers, Messrs. Campbell and Fitzpatrick. I will give him the packet directly after his return, and will inform you of the sentiments with which he will have received it, as well as his reply.

Here in our missions, we already observe all the conditions stipulated in the treaty concluded last year by Governor Stevens, at Hellgate. Our brothers assist the Indians, and teach them how to cultivate the ground. They distribute the fields and the seeds for sowing and planting, as well as the plows and other agricultural instruments. Our blacksmith works for them: he repairs their guns, their axes, their knives; the carpenter renders them great assistance in constructing their houses, by making the doors and windows; in fine, our little mill is daily in use for grinding their grain, *gratis;* we distribute some medicines to the sick;— in a word, all we have and all we are is sacrificed to the welfare of the

Indian. The savings that our religious economy enables us to make, we retain solely to relieve their miseries. Whatever we gain by manual labor and by the sweat of the brow, is theirs! Through love of Jesus Christ, we are ready to sacrifice all, even life itself. Last year we opened our school; but circumstances forced us to close it. Next spring we shall have a brother capable of teaching, and we intend opening it a second time; but in the interval we shall not earn a cent. During last October, the snow forced Fathers Joset and Ravalli and Brother Saveo to return to the Cœur d'Alènes.

We have done, and shall continue to do, all that lies in our power for the Government officers. Still our poor mission has never received a farthing from the Government. Do not think, Reverend Father, that I complain — oh no! you are too well assured no earthly good could ever induce us to work and suffer as we do here. As wealth itself could never recompense our toils, so privations are incapable of leading us to renounce our noble enterprise. Heaven, heaven alone is our aim; and that reward will far exceed our deserts. On the other hand, we are consoled by the reflection that he who provides for the birds of the air will never abandon his tenderly loved children. Yet it is not less true, that, if we had resources (humanly speaking), our missions would be more flourishing; and that many things that we now accomplish only with great patience and sore privations, and which again frequently depend upon contingencies, could be effected more rapidly and with less uncertainty of success.

In our mission there are persons of such a variety of nations, that we form, so to speak, a heaven in miniature. First, our community is composed of six members, all of whom are natives of different lands. Then we have creoles; Genetzi, whose wife is Susanna, daughter of the old Ignatius Chaves; Abraham and Peter Tinsley, sons of old Jacques Boiteux; Alexander Thibault, a Canadian, and Derpens. There are some Iroquois: old Ignatius is settled here, as well as the family of Iroquois Peter. The death of this venerable old man is a great loss to the mission. Then we have creoles from the Creek nation; Pierrish, and Anson, with his brothers; then some Flatheads; Kalispels; two camps of Pend d'Oreilles; then several Spokans; some Nez Precés, Kootenais, Cœur d'Alènes, and Kettle-Falls Indians; a few Americans, settled a few miles from here; and some Blackfeet. All, though of different nations, live together like brethren and in perfect harmony. They have, like the primitive Christians, but one heart and one mind.

Last spring, and during the summer following, we had several Blackfeet here. They behaved extremely well. Among others, the Little Dog, chief of the Piegans, with some members of his family. They entered our camp with the American flag unfurled, and marching to the tones of martial music and an innumerable quantity of little bells. The very horses pranced in accordance with the measure, and assumed a stately deportment at the harmony of the national hymn.

We held several conferences with the chief concerning religion. He complained that the whites, who had been in communication with them, had never treated this so important affair. So far the best understanding reigns between us, and it would appear that all the old difficulties are forgotten. May heaven keep them in these favorable dispositions. Last summer the Crows stole about twenty horses from our nation. A few days after, others visited our camp. The remembrance of this theft so excited the people that, forgetting the law of nations, which secures protection to even the greatest enemy as soon as he puts his foot within the camp, they fell upon the poor guests, and killed two of them ere they had time to escape.

May God bless the Government for establishing peace among the Blackfeet! However, as hitherto the means have not proved very efficacious, I fear that the quiet will not be of very long duration. I trust that our Society will one day effect a more enduring peace. A mission among them would, I am persuaded, produce this blessed result. And if to bedew this hitherto ungrateful soil requires the blood of some happy missionary, it would bring forth a hundredfold, and the Blackfeet would respect our holy religion.

I am much distressed at learning that an epidemic disease is making terrible ravages among the Blackfeet. According to the last news, about 150 Indians had perished in one camp alone, near Fort Benton. When the malady had ceased scourging men, it fell upon their horses. Many are dead already, and many are dying. We have lost five. Our hunters are forced to go to the chase on foot; for, according to their account, all the horses are sick. If the Nez Percés lose their horses in the war with Government, horses will be very dear here.

Michael, the Little Chief, has arrived. I presented him the gracious gift of Colonel Campbell. He was astonished that the colonel should think of him, and was much moved at this mark of attachment. Then he cited a long list of kindred, dead since his last interview with Colonel Campbell, and entertained me at length with the great number of Americans that he had seen annually passing Fort Hall. He told me with what solicitude and anxiety he sought his friend among those successive multitudes, and when at length he could not discover him, he believed that he was dead.

Our Indians are bison hunting, and quite successful. Five Spokans have been killed by the Bannocks, and six of these last killed by the Spokans and Cœur d'Alènes. The Flatheads have had a man killed by the same Bannocks. Louis, Ambrose's son, was killed last fall by the Grosventres. All last winter a good understanding prevailed among the Blackfeet. Many of them will come, I think, and reside with us.

The Nez Percés and the Spokans endeavor to spread a bad spirit among the Indians who reside in the country below. They endeavor to communicate their hatred of the Americans; but our chiefs are firm, and will in no wise acquiesce in the desire of their enemies. Victor, the great chief, and Ambrose, are here again, in order to accomplish their spiritual duties. Unfortunately a great antipathy prevails among these tribes.

Mr. McArthur, formerly agent of the Hudson Bay Company, has now settled at Hellgate.

To conclude, Reverend Father, I entreat you to believe that, notwithstanding your reiterated exhortations to assure me, it is not without a feeling of restraint that I inclose you anew the list of things we need this year. I am aware that you are weighed down with business; but who, as well as yourself, can know and understand our position?

I entreat you to present my respects to all my kind friends who are at the university, at St. Charles, and elsewhere.

Your reverence's most respectful servant,

A. HOEKEN, S. J.

CHAPTER II.

LETTERS FROM THE RESIDENT MISSIONARIES.[1]

Adventures of a missionary — Sufferings and danger — A Dakota blizzard — Charles Larpenteur — Needs of the Sioux — Iowa in 1851 — Dangers of delay.

The Sioux.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels:[1]

Paris, November 17, 1856.

Reverend and Dear Father:

I FIND with pleasure in your number of the 15th inst., the interesting letter of Father Adrian Hoeken, written to me from the Flathead camp, which I sent you from St. Louis before I started for Belgium.

Herewith are four letters of his brother, Father Christian Hoeken, which will, I think, be found as interesting as Father Adrian's. In a few days I shall see you at Brussels.

First Letter of Father Christian Hoeken to Father De Smet.

Sioux Country, Fort Vermilion, Dec. 11, 1850.

Reverend and Dear Father:

You have doubtless learned by Father Duerinck's letters that I set out last June for the Sioux country. The season was quite favorable when I left Kansas, but I had a pretty cold time as I crossed Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota till I got to the post of the American Fur Company, called Fort Vermilion. My inability to find a good guide to lead me to Fort Pierre, the great post of the Missouri, made me lose five days of excellent weather.

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[1] From *Western Missions and Missionaries*, p. 263.

At last I succeeded in finding a companion who had crossed backward and forward, for the last thirty-three years, every plain, mountain, forest and prairie of the West. I set out the day before the weather changed. On the third day the snow overtook us. On reaching James river we found it impassable; the water was too high and too cold for our horses to swim it. We had to ascend it to find a ford. We traveled eight or nine days without finding any place or means to cross. A violent north wind set in, so that we were nearly frozen to death. We accordingly began to descend the valley of the river, but had not made over five or six miles when night surprised us, and we had to encamp in a spot which offered scarce wood enough for one night. We had hardly encamped when the north wind began to blow with horrible violence; the snow fell so thick and fast, that you would have said the clouds had burst. You may imagine our position, and how much we pitied each other. Sleep was out of the question. The next morning we struck our camp. The snow and wind raged with unabated fury for two days and two nights. In some spots there were six, fifteen, and even twenty feet of snow. Conceive our position if you can, as we made our way along the valley of James river, which runs between two chains of mountains, with deep ravines near each other.

We were almost out of provisions, entirely alone, in a sad desert, where we could see nothing but snow; we had no one to encourage us, except the spirit of divine charity, at whose voice I had undertaken this painful journey. The snow grew high around us, our horses would not proceed. The gloomy thought that we could never cross the river crushed out all courage; but I was consoled when I remembered the words of divine wisdom: "It is good for you to suffer temptation." To fill up our misery, rheumatism seized both my knees, so that I could not set one foot before another. One of our horses fell lame and was no better than myself. Moreover, the keen norther froze my ears, nose and feet, and my companion's feet. The poor man complained of violent pains in the bowels, caused doubtless by fatigue and hunger. The elements seemed to conspire against us; and it is only by a special assistance of heaven that we did not perish in this strait. "I never saw anything like it. I have lived, wandered, traveled, for thirty-five years all over the upper Missouri, but never, never was I in such a scrape as this." Such were the frequent exclamations of my guide. For my part, I was forced by a dire necessity to march against my inclination, or rather to drag myself along as best I could. I gathered up what little courage I had left. I walked on in the snow from morning to night, praying and weeping in turns, making vows and resolutions. The aspirations of the prophets and apostles were the subject of my communications with heaven. "Confirm me, O Lord, in this hour. Rebuke me not in thy fury, and chastise me not in thy wrath." This I repeated at almost every instant. When I sank to my waist in snow, I cried: "Have mercy, Lord, have mercy on us. For thee and for thine have we come unto this hour. Stretch out thy arm to lead us. Lord, we perish."

Meanwhile, we advanced painfully over the mountains of snow, till night summoned us to plant our tent, which consisted, be it said here, of a square piece of a skin tent-cover. We set to work with courage, clearing away the snow, getting down a framework and wood enough for our fires at night. The fire is kindled; we have finished our night prayers; we have only a morsel to eat. Now, then, repose for a few hours. Impossible. Sleep has fled our eyelids; the smoke blinds and stifles us, at almost every instant we had to cough; my companion said that it was impossible to distinguish one object from another, the smoke had so blinded him. How sleep, with the wolves howling and prowling around us! The snow and sometimes rain and hail fell on us all night long. Often, while listening for any noise, the prayer, "From all danger, rain and hail, deliver us, O Lord!" escaped my trembling lips involuntarily. Thank heaven, the Almighty heard our humble supplication; every day he gave us fine weather, though bitter cold. My greatest fear every morning was that my companion would bring word that our horses were dead of cold or hunger in those bleak and sterile tracts. Had this loss befallen us, our misfortune would have been complete. I put myself and all belonging to me under the special protection of our good and amiable patroness, the Blessed Virgin Immaculate, and I often reminded her, with filial confidence, that we had been committed to her care at the foot of the cross.

From day to day, my guide was the more urgent that we should abandon the lame horse so as not to be frozen for him. We had to lose a good part of the day in unloading and reloading him, because he fell at almost every step on the slippery snow; yet by care, pain, fatigue and patience, we arrived with our two horses at Fort Vermilion. Famished and almost dying as we were (having had nothing to eat for ten days, but a little bread and a prairie-hen that my companion killed by chance), sleepless and wearied to death, we reached Vermilion on the 8th of December, the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To express the joy that overflowed my soul on that happy day I would need write in tears, not in ink, and you could trace my feelings better than if delineated with a pen. I was at the end of hunger, cold, snow, rain, hail, tramping, and blasphemy that filled me with horror every time my companion vented his wrath on the horse or the evils we experienced. I rebuked him frequently and begged him to refrain, but in vain; the poor man had always the same excuse: "It was a second nature with him, and he meant no harm." Wretched excuse! I suffered more from his troubles and murmurs than from all the other miseries put together. To my prayers of blended hope, and fear, and anguish, succeeded now hymns of gratitude and joy. Instead of my ordinary aspirations: "Enough, Lord, it is enough. Command the winds and there shall be a great calm. Lord, thou hast said: Ask and you shall receive. Give us this day our daily bread," and so on, I now exclaim: "We praise thee, O Lord! great is thy power, Lord God of hosts."

Mr. Charles Larpenteur, whose hospitality you have often enjoyed when traveling in the desert to visit the Indian tribes, is now in charge of the post, and he received us with all the goodness of a father. He procured us all that he could. May the Lord bless him, for he deserves it. "The Samaritan in the Gospel," said he, "took care of an unfortunate man, and poured oil and wine into his wounds. Sir," he added, "you are welcome. I offer you all I have; I wish to treat you as well as is in my power." The dignity and worth of charity are never better felt than on similar occasions, and by beggars like us.

I shall spend some days instructing and baptizing a score of people who live around here. I shall endeavor to recover from my unusual hardships before I start. In the meanwhile the snow will melt, the roads become better, and I will resume my journey.

Receive the assurance of my respect. Present my respects to the Fathers and Brothers, and believe me,

Reverend and Dear Father,

Your devoted servant and brother in Christ,

CHRISTIAN HOEKEN, S. J.

You see, Reverend Father, by this letter of Father Hoeken, that the consolations of heaven are constantly tempered by the desolations of earth. This is the support of the laborers in the vineyard of the Lord.

I have come to Europe for missionaries. Belgium has already furnished many. St. Francis Xavier asked for Belgians. Shall I succeed in getting some? Cannot I count on my own land as much as on Holland, France, or Italy?

Second Letter of Father Christian Hoeken.— To Father Elet.

Territory of the Platte, Dec. 28, 1850.

Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:

According to my express promise in my letters, I write to tell you where I have been, and what I have done since I left the Kansas, till my return from the Upper Missouri.

I traveled by the way of Weston, without a cent in my pocket. I had to trust entirely to Providence. A draft of ten dollars on Father De Smet enabled me to get the actual necessaries for my journey. I should have drawn more, but it was all they could let me have.

On the way I met several old friends, whose liberality did not improve my poverty. I reached St. Joseph at the foot of the Black-snake Hills. My horse could not stand the hard travel. Others were of my opinion, among them was Mr. Scanlan, who offered me an Indian horse to go as far as Bellevue, and also to take charge of mine. I accepted his kind offer. In two days I was quite disappointed. The horse was very lazy, and weak in the bargain. I changed him at the Great Pacoa [Platte?Tarkio?] river for a good horse, whose exterior promised better in the long journey before me. I gave the man a draft on Mr. P. A. Sarpy to pay the difference.

On reaching Bellevue, I learned from Mr. Sarpy that Messrs. Bruyère and Argot had started the day before, and that I could easily overtake them; that there was no guide for me, and they knew none about there. I bought the necessary utensils, a little pot, tin-pans, provisions, etc., and started in pursuit of the gentlemen, who live about thirty miles below Fort Vermillion at the mouth of the Great Sioux. I overtook them next day at Boyer River. I traveled in their company seven days, when we reached the Great Sioux.

I spent three days there instructing the people, and baptized fourteen persons. They treated me with great kindness, and expressed their extreme delight at the prospect of the establishment of a Sioux mission. They promised to pay for their children's board. They are not only full of good will, but capable of acting.

As for the mixed race of the Santees (a Sioux tribe), they receive from Government about $1,000 a head, according to the treaty made last year at St. Peter's River in the Upper Missouri. You see, then, Reverend Father, that if we defer founding a mission among them, they will send their children elsewhere. Do not imagine that the number of these poor children, all baptized by Father De Smet and others, is insignificant. The half-breeds exist in great numbers everywhere, with thousands of Indians. Must all these children, of whom several thousand have already received holy baptism, perish for want of instruction? Are they doomed to remain sitting in the shadow of death? May I not announce to them all, the precious tidings of vocation to grace? I trust, in God's mercy, the day of their deliverance is at hand; that they will soon perceive the aid of the Saviour and Redeemer. My daily prayer is (above all at the holy altar) that their expectations and frequent appeals may at length find a term.

I forgot to say, that on arriving at Linden, a village situated eight miles below the river Nishnabotna, I found Major Matlock very dangerously ill with dysentery. He recognized me at once, and cried out: "Father Hoeken, I am extremely glad to see you. I wished to see you much a long time; but I am so indisposed at this moment that I cannot converse with you. Could you not come a little later?" "Most willingly," I replied; "I will see you by and by." An hour after I returned to his room in the hotel; I found him half asleep. He heard my voice, and after having dismissed those who were with him, he spoke to me of his religious convictions. He informed me that he had been brought up in the Methodist sect, but that he did not believe in their views, and that his most ardent desire was to become a Catholic. He then made his confession to me; after which, I baptized him conditionally. He appeared to me to be perfectly contented and resigned to die. I have since learned that he did not long survive his baptism. May he rest in peace.

I commend myself to your prayers and sacrifices, Reverend Father Provincial,

Your most humble servant,
CHRISTIAN HOEKEN, S. J.

Third Letter of Father Christian Hoeken.—To Father Elet.

St. Joseph's, Jan. 3, 1851.

Reverend and Very Dear Father Provincial:

I was obliged to wait in order to regulate my account with Mr. P. A. Sarpy, who was absent when I arrived at Council Bluffs. That time was not lost. I had the happiness of baptizing a great number of children of the Omaha tribe, and I met the young chief, Logan Fontenelle. He is a spiritual child of Father De Smet. He is very worthy of the post he fills in his tribe, and will do all in his power to convert his people and bring them to the true faith.[2]

I quitted Council Bluffs on the 27th of December. I arrived on the river Nishnabotna at a place called French Village. It is occupied almost exclusively by Canadians, by half-breeds, and a mixture of Indians united among themselves. I was received with much kindness, and employed Saturday and Sunday in confirming and strengthening them in the faith.

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[2] He fell, in 1855, in a combat against a great war-party of the Sioux. —(*Note by Father De Smet.*)

As soon as my arrival was known, the people collected on all sides, in order to secure to their children the grace of baptism. You can easily imagine what a consolation it was to me after the fatigues of the late journey. On examining the state of things, I found that those people needed instruction in regard to the sacrament of marriage. They listened to me with profound attention, and followed my advice on this point. I baptized sixteen persons, among whom was one converted from Mormonism and one Sioux squaw. I gave the nuptial benediction to three couples. In the midst of a meeting held in a private house, the conversation fell on the construction of a village church; each one offered his services, and promised to approach the sacraments. How great and plentiful is the harvest, but alas, how few are the reapers! We must, in truth, but in sadness, repeat with the prophet Jeremiah: "The children ask bread and there is no one to break it to them." What a vast field for them of whom the scripture says: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the footsteps of those who proclaim the glad tidings of peace and salvation."

A month's traveling in the desert through which these people are wandering deprived of instruction, would bestow on our missionaries greater experience of the evils of ignorance and of superstition, than many years passed in studying them in books and writings, and one hour of conversation would inspire Christian hearts with sentiments of more real compassion, than all the discourses of rhetoric and all the artifices of eloquence could ever produce. If the Catholics of civilized countries, and provided with all the advantages that civilization offers for the soul and for the body, could, during one single week, experience what is endured in the midst of the ravages and violence of this poor Indian country, their hearts would open to the sentiments of a truly active compassion, and they would extend a charitable hand to relieve the misery and mitigate the bitterness of their wretched and afflicting condition.

There are in human life certain marks of degradation which, at first sight, awaken the tender sentiments of a Christian heart; there are interior trials and sorrows which need to be related to excite charity toward those who suffer them. Such are, my dear Father, the troubles and sufferings of the Indians. Deprived of civilized society, destitute of all the advantages of social life, ignorant of the very elements of individual duty, they are a prey to exterior deceptions, to interior illusions, and their days are counted by overwhelming evils and misfortunes as numerous as the hours which mark their duration. But when it pleases a wise Providence to permit that they be visited by other and extraordinary trials, as it happened to the Potawatomies, who lost their harvest, their ills are increased a hundredfold, and nothing but the consolations of the gospel are capable of ameliorating the hard lot of barbarism and the anguish of ignorance. May heaven deign to inspire a large number of worthy ministers of the Church with a zeal in conformity with the will of God, and inspire also a great number of Christians with that charity which covers a multitude of sins, in order that they may come to their aid amid the painful sufferings which they are at this moment undergoing.

My respects to all,
Reverend Father Provincial,
Your most humble servant,
CHRISTIAN HOEKEN, S. J.

Fourth Letter.— To Reverend Father Elet.

Bellevue, December 23, 1850.

Reverend and Very Dear Father Provincial:

I left Fort Vermilion on the third Sunday of Advent; I descended the Great Sioux as far as its confluence. There

I met with Major Halton, who is agent for the Upper Missouri.

He employed all his eloquence to persuade me to accompany him as far as Fort Pierre, which is the post of the Little Missouri. He will probably stop there, at about the middle of January. God alone knows what the weather will prove at that time. He presented us a beautiful buffalo-robe, and told me, that if we would establish a mission in these sections, he would contribute annually $100. Another gentleman added, I have three children to educate; I will furnish $300 per year, and be assured, continued he, that every white man residing in this locality that has a family of mixed race (and there are a great number of them), will assist you to the best of their ability — one in one manner and another in another, according to their means. The Brûlés, and Yanktons, and the other Sioux tribes assembled in council said: "The missionaries shall not perish with hunger among us; we will bring them an abundance of buffalo-robes and buffalo-meat, so that they can purchase clothes for the children who will be confided to them."

For the love of God and of souls, I conjure you, Reverend Father, not to defer any longer. All the good that Father De Smet and others have produced by their labors and visits will be lost and forgotten, if these Indians are disappointed in their expectations. They weigh men's characters in the balance of honesty; in their eyes whosoever does not fulfill his promises is culpable; they do not regard or consider whether it be done for good reasons, or that there is an impossibility in the execution. Some of them have sent their children to Protestant schools, and they will continue to do so as long as we form no establishments among them.

From all this you may easily conclude that there is apostasy and all its attendant evils. Immortal souls are precious in the sight of God. You are acquainted with my dispositions — arrange everything according to your own good will and pleasure. My sole desire is to endure fatigue and suffering, as much as I can with God's assisting grace, and as long as I shall live. I have deposited my hopes in the bosom of my God; I expect my recompense from his goodness, not in this life, but in the next.

Yours, etc.,

CHRISTIAN HOEKEN, S. J.

These four letters of Reverend Father Hoeken show sufficiently, my dear and reverend Father, the spiritual wants of these nations and their desire of being assisted. Apostasy is more frequent than is generally believed in Europe. Oh! if the zealous priests of the Continent knew what we know, had they seen what we have witnessed, their generous hearts would transport them beyond the seas, and they would hasten to consecrate their lives to a ministry fruitful in salutary results. Time passes; already the sectaries of various shades are preparing to penetrate more deeply into the desert, and will wrest from those degraded and unhappy tribes their last hope — that of knowing and practicing the sole and true faith. Shall they, in fine, obtain the Black-robes, whom they have expected and called for during so many years?

Accept, Reverend Father, the assurance of my sincere friendship.

P. J. DE SMET.

CHAPTER III.

TRIBUTES TO THE FLATHEADS AND OTHER TRIBES.[1]

Testimony of Lieutenant Mullan and Governor Stevens — Progress in agriculture and useful arts — Pious devotions — Stolen horses returned — Advancement of the Cœur d'Alènes — The Indian outbreak.

Brussels, Feast of St. Xavier, December 3, 1856.

Reverend Mother:

THE festival of to-day renews in my mind the recollection of the pleasant time I spent at Erps, last Monday. I must again thank you for the kind reception I received at your convent and academy.

The repeated invitations you have extended to me, since my return to Belgium, through Father Terwecoren, who took me there, made it a duty on my part to go. I owed you this visit also personally, Reverend Mother, on account of the ties which always have existed, and still exist, between your family and mine. This recommendation was made to me at Termonde. It was, indeed, pleasant for me to meet you, after thirty-five years' absence, and especially to find you consecrated to God by the vows of religion. During my long travels over the world, I have always found in religious communities the greatest amount of happiness to which man can aspire here below.

But independent of this personal motive, the Academy of the Servants of Mary would leave, in my mind, a most pleasing recollection. I shall never forget this little family festival, the charitable and pious words addressed to me by one of your scholars, in the name of her companions; the earnest attention paid by them to my accounts, and the prayers they promised me for my poor Indians; that beautiful hymn in honor of St. Francis Xavier, the patron of missionaries; the happiness of the little village children, gathered in the day-school, where their hearts learn to love God and serve him by labor; the respectful deference of all the sisters, and of your worthy director.

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[1] To the Mother Superior of the Convent and Academy of Erps-Querbs, between Brussels and Louvain. From *Western Missions and Missionaries*, p. 275.

I thank you, then, Reverend Mother, for this welcome; and, in the name of the Indians, I thank you especially for the alms which the convent has confided to me for them, and the vestments which you prepare. The Indians pray for their benefactors; they will pray especially for the Servants of Mary, and for their young pupils, as soon as I tell them all.

As an anticipated testimony of their gratitude, and that the remembrance of this day may abide, your community ever prosper more and more, your young ladies, when they come forth from that house of the Lord, preserve preciously the inappreciable gift of piety and the pure lustre of all virtue, I propose to give to the first little Indian girls that I baptize after my return, the Christian names of the religious and pupils whom I saw assembled, that they may pray for their benefactresses. Please to prepare a list, and send it to Father Terwecoren, who is collecting all that is offered for the mission.

I add to this letter a copy of the tributes of admiration paid to the Flatheads, as well as the Pater and Ave in Osage. It is a little souvenir for the Academy of Erps-Querbs.

I. *Tribute of admiration rendered to the Flatheads, by an officer of the United States army, sent with Governor Stevens to explore St. Mary's valley.* These lines are drawn from a report recently issued by order of Government. *Explorations, etc., from the Mississippi to the Pacific ocean*, p. 308. Lieutenant Mullan says:

"When I arrived at the camp with my guide, three or four men came out to meet us, and we were invited to enter the lodge of the great chief. With much eagerness they took care of our horses, unsaddled them, and led them to drink. As soon as the camp had been informed of the arrival of a white man among them, all the principal men of the tribe collected at the lodge of the chief.

"All being assembled, at a signal given by the chief, they prayed aloud. I was struck with astonishment, for I had not the least expectation of such conduct on their part. The whole assembly knelt. In the most solemn manner, and with the greatest reverence, they adored the Lord. I asked myself: Am I among Indians? Am I among people whom all the world call savages? I could scarcely believe my eyes. The thought that these men were penetrated with religious sentiments, so profound and beautiful, overwhelmed me with amazement.

"I could never say enough of those noble and generous hearts among whom I found myself. They were pious and firm, men of confidence, full of probity, and penetrated at the same time with a lively and religious faith, to which they remain constant. They never partake of a repast without imploring the blessing of heaven. In the morning, when rising, and at night, when retiring, they offer their prayers to Almighty God. The tribe of the Flatheads among the Indians is the subject of their highest esteem; and all that I witnessed myself justifies this advantageous opinion."

Here is another testimony from the Hon. Isaac I. Stevens, Governor of Washington Territory. Giving orders to Lieutenant Mullan, he says:

"Tell those good Flatheads that the words of Father De Smet in their behalf have been received by their Great Father, the President of the United States, and that all good people are devoted to them. I would like to rebuild St. Mary's. Let them know that I am attached to them, and ready to aid their old benefactors in their well-being. This would be most pleasing to me."

He wrote to the Indian agent:

"You are already aware of the character of the Flatheads. They are the best Indians of the mountains and the plains — honest, brave, and docile, they only need encouragement to become good citizens — they are Christians, and we are assured that they live up to the Christian code."

This passage is from the message to the President in 1854. You see, Reverend Mother, that my eulogium at Erps-Querbs, on the Flatheads, is also in the mouths of the Americans. It is the same with the other Indians. The sisters of the pupils may then rely on the prayers and gratitude of the little girls who bear their names. May these children of the desert have the same means of salvation as the children of Belgium.

Accept, Reverend Mother, this trifling homage of my gratitude, and express the same sentiments to your worthy Director, community, and pupils.

Your servant in Christ, etc.

To the Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.[2]

Oregon Missions.

University of St. Louis, July 16, 1857.

Reverend Father:

Since my return to St. Louis I have been very busy, and not very well, in consequence of the sudden transition from a cold climate to one where the thermometer stands at 90° Fahrenheit. I have not been able, thus far, to send you any interesting article. I have lately received a long and beautiful letter from Father A. Hoeken, in the Rocky Mountains. It appeared, on the 11th instant, in the *Freeman's Journal,* which you receive regularly. I shall try and send you a translation.

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[2] From *Western Missions and Missionaries,* p. 280.

I inclose to-day a short notice of Father Eysvogels. If you give it a place in your *Précis*, it will give pleasure to the friends and acquaintances of that good Father in North Brabant.

As you propose terminating a volume of my letters, you would do well, perhaps, to add, if there is time, a letter to the St. Louis *Leader*, dated June 19, 1855, which you can have translated.

St. Louis, June 19, 1855.

Mr. Editor:

From a letter received from the Rocky Mountains about two months ago, I learn that the Indians, in our different missions in Oregon, continue to give great satisfaction to their missionaries, by their zeal and fervor in the holy practices of religion. "I hope," writes Father Joset, "that the holy sacrament of confirmation, which many have lately received, will add still more stability to their good resolutions. The arrival of Monseigneur Blanchet, of Nisqually, had been announced only a few hours before, yet, notwithstanding that one-half of the neophytes were absent on their hunting grounds, the zealous prelate gave confirmation to over 600 persons. He expressed the greatest satisfaction at the flourishing condition of the missions, and the exemplary and Christian conduct of the Indian faithful."

The conversions to our holy faith, if you consider the small number of our missionaries, are very consoling and encouraging. Father Joset says, that in the Mission of St. Paul's alone, among the Skoyelpis or Kettle Falls Indians, he had 163 converts in the course of the year. He further states in his letter, that Lieutenant Mullan, of the United States army, visited the Flatheads, and several others of our missions, by order of Governor Stevens, of the new Territory of Washington, and that the distinguished officer had expressed great delight at all he saw among the Indians, promising withal to favor them and to speak well of them in his report. Governor Stevens himself, in his report to the President of the United States, commends them highly, and calls upon the Government for aid and assistance. "They are," says he, speaking of the Flatheads, "the best Indians of the mountains and the plains — honest, brave and docile — they only need encouragement to become good citizens; they are Christians, and we are assured that they live up to the Christian code," etc.

Most respectfully, Dear Sir,
Your humble and obedient servant,
P. J. De SMET, S. J.

You see, Reverend Father, that I have cited the testimony of Governor Stevens, as to our Indian missions. The details which I shall give you in this letter emanate from the same source, as honorable as it is truthful. They form part of an official report on the State of Oregon, sent by that magistrate to the President of the United States, in 1855, and published by order of Government.

Speaking of the tribe of Pend d'Oreilles, the Governor says:

"I am indebted to Doctor Suckley for many interesting facts in relation to the mission of St. Ignatius, established among the lower Pend d'Oreilles; it would be difficult to find a more beautiful example of successful missionary labors. The mission was established nine years ago, by Reverend P. J. De Smet, the whole country at that time being a vast wilderness.

"For the first two years the missionaries lived in skin lodges, accompanying the natives on their periodical hunts and visits to their fishing grounds.

"During this time they found it very hard to live. Their food consisted principally of camas-roots and dried berries, which at best contain very little nourishment. They raised some wheat, which they boiled in the beard, for fear of waste; parching some of the grains to make a substitute for coffee. After this, they slowly but steadily increased in welfare. Each year added a small piece to their tillable ground. They then obtained pigs, poultry, cattle, horses, agricultural implements, and tools. Their supplies of tools, seeds, groceries, clothing, etc., are shipped direct from Europe to the Columbia river. There are two lay brethren attached to the mission. One of them, Brother Francis, is a perfect jack-of-all-trades. He is by turns a carpenter, blacksmith, gunsmith and tinman; in each handicraft he is a good workman. The other, Brother McGean, superintends the farming operations. They both worked hard in bringing the mission to its present state of perfection, building successively a windmill, blacksmith's and carpenter's shops, barns, cowsheds, etc., besides an excellent chapel, in addition to a large dwelling-house, of hewn timber, for the missionaries.

"The church is quite large, and is tastefully and even beautifully decorated. I was shown the handsomely carved and gilded altar, the statue of our 'Mother,' brazen crosses, and rich bronzed fonts — work which at sight appears so well executed as to lead one to suppose that they must all have been imported.

"Works of ornament are not their only deeds. A grindstone, hewn out of the native rock, and modeled by the same hand which made the chisel which wrought it, tinware, a blacksmith's bellows, plow-shares, bricks for their chimneys, their own tobacco-pipes, turned with the lathe out of wood, and lined with tin, all have been made by their industry. In household economy they are not excelled. They make their own soap, candles, vinegar, etc., and it is interesting and amusing to listen to the account of their plans, shifts and turns, in overcoming obstacles at their first attempts, their repeated failures and their final triumphs. The present condition of the mission is as follows:

"The buildings are: The house, a good, substantial, comfortable edifice; the chapel, a building sufficiently large to accommodate the whole Kalispel nation. A small building is attached to the dwelling-house; it contains a couple of sleeping-rooms, and a workshop, a blacksmith's shop, and a storeroom for the natives. These are all built of square or hewn timber. Besides these there are a number of smaller outbuildings, built of logs, for the accommodation of their horses and cattle during the winter, and an excellent roothouse.

"The mission farm consists of about 160 acres of cleared land: wheat (spring), barley, onions, cabbages, parsnips, peas, beets, potatoes and carrots. Father Hoeken says, that if the children see carrots growing, they must eat some. Says he, 'I must shut my eyes to the theft, because they *cannot* resist the temptation. Anything else than carrots, the little creatures respect.'

"The Indians are very fond of peas and cabbages, but beets, and particularly onions, they dislike. The other productions of the farm are cattle, hogs, poultry, butter and cheese. Around the mission buildings are the houses of the natives. These are built of logs and hewn timber, and are sixteen in number. There are also quite a number of mat and skin lodges. Although the tribe is emphatically a wandering tribe, yet the mission and its vicinity are looked upon as headquarters.

"When the missionaries came among the Indians, they found them to be a poor, miserable, half-starved race, with an insufficiency of food, and nearly naked; living upon fish, camas and other roots, and, as the last extremity, upon the pine-tree moss. They were in utter misery and want. The whole time was occupied in providing for their bellies, which were rarely full. They were of a peaceable disposition, brave, good-tempered and willing to work.

"Of spiritual things they were utterly ignorant. Unlike the Indians east of the mountains, they had no idea of a future state or of a Great Spirit, neither had they any idea of a soul; in fact, they had not words in their language to express such ideas. They considered themselves to be animals, nearly allied to the beaver, but greater than the beaver, 'because,' they said, 'the beaver builds houses like us, and he is very cunning; true, but we can catch the beaver, and he cannot catch us, therefore we are greater than he.'

"They thought that when they died, that was the last of them. While thus ignorant, it was nothing uncommon for them to bury the very old and the very young alive, because, they said, 'these cannot take care of themselves, and we cannot take care of them, and they had better die.'

"The missionaries had an arduous labor before them. They commenced by gaining the good will of the inhabitants, by means of small presents, and by manifesting great interest in their welfare, in attendance upon the sick, and by giving the poor creatures food, seeds and instruction as to farming.

"The Indians could not help seeing that no hopes of temporal or personal benefit induced the missionaries thus to labor among them.

"The missionaries told them that they had a Creator, and that he was good. They told them of their Savior, and of the manner of addressing him by prayer. To this they listened, and believed.

"The people look up to the Father, and love him. They say that if the Father should go away, they would die.

"Before the advent of the missionaries, the inhabitants, though totally destitute of religious ideas, still believed that evil and bad luck emanated from a fabulous old woman or sorceress. They were great believers in charms or medicine. Every man had his particular medicine or charm, and from it they expected either good or ill. With some it would be the mouse, with others the deer, buffalo, elk, salmon, bear, etc.; and whichever it was, the savage would carry a portion of it constantly with him. The tail of a mouse, or the fur, hoof, claw, feather, fin, or scale, of whatever it might be, became the amulet. When a young man grew up, he was not yet considered a man until he had discovered his medicine. His father would send him to the top of a high mountain in the neighborhood of the present mission; here he was obliged to remain without food until he had dreamed of an animal; the first one so dreamed about becoming his medicine for life. Of course, anxiety, fatigue, cold and fasting would render his sleep troubled, and replete with dreams. In a short time he would have dreamed of what he wanted, and return to his home a man.

"The missionaries say that these Indians are industrious, and not lazy, as compared to other Indians; that they are willing to work; but the land is so poor, and so little of it is susceptible of cultivation, that they cannot farm enough.

"The mission farm, as already stated, contains about 160 acres. This is kept up for the natives, as but a few acres would be amply sufficient for the missionaries. Each Indian who wishes it, is allowed a certain amount of land to cultivate for his own use, and is provided with tools and seeds.

"Before reaching the Mission of St. Ignatius, Doctor Suckley found four lodges of the Pend d'Oreilles about half a mile above the outlet of Lake De Boey. These lodges were all built after the fashion of the Sioux lodge, with the single difference that they were covered with mats of reeds, instead of skins. These mats are made of rushes laid parallel, and fastened together at their ends. For convenience in traveling, the mats are rolled into cylindrical bundles, and are thus easily carried in canoes. Doctor Suckley's provisions being out, he concluded to lodge all night with All-ol-stargh, the head of the encampment. The other lodges were principally occupied by his children and grandchildren. 'Shortly after our entrance,' says Doctor Suckley, 'All-ol-stargh rung a little bell; directly the lodge was filled with the inhabitants of the camp, men, women and children, who immediately got on their knees, and repeated, or rather chanted, a long prayer, in their own language. The repetition of a few pious sentences, an invocation, and a hymn, closed the exercises. In these the squaws took as active a part as the men. The promptness, fervency and earnestness, all showed, was pleasing to contemplate. The participation of the squaws in the exercises, and the apparent footing of equality between them and the men, so much unlike their condition in other savage tribes, appear remarkable.' "

The following trait, mentioned by Mr. Doty in his report, attests their good faith and decision of character:

"On the 1st of November, six Pend d'Oreille Indians came to this post, and delivered up all the horses that were stolen. It appears that they were taken by two young Pend d'Oreilles, and run to the Pend d'Oreille camp, then hunting beyond the Muscleshell, under the command of a chief of that nation, Alexander. The horses were recognized, by the stamps, as belonging to the whites, and the young men confessed having stolen them at this post. A council was held, and it was determined that it was a great sin to steal horses from the white men who were friendly to them; that the wishes of the 'Great Soldier Chief,' who had been at St. Mary's, were known to them, and they had promised compliance with them; that stealing these horses would give the Pend d'Oreilles the name of liars and triflers; that they had always borne a good name, and were ashamed to have mean things said of them now; therefore the horses must be taken back by the great chief and five principal men of the tribe. Accordingly, they came boldly to the fort and delivered up the horses, without asking any reward, but, on the contrary, expressing much sorrow and shame that they had been taken.

"Thus the six Indians proved themselves not only honest, but brave in the highest degree, coming, as they did, five days and nights into an enemy's country, simply to do an act of justice to strangers. They remained here two days, and on departing were accompanied by Mr. Clark and myself fifteen or twenty miles on their journey."

In regard to the Flatheads, the Governor says:

"Lieutenant Mullan, in his journal of September 20th, relates the following incident, illustrative of their noble character: 'We had to-night a great luxury, in a string of mountain trout, brought into camp by one of our Flathead friends. Our Indians displayed, on this occasion, a trait worthy of notice. They were without meat or anything to eat. We were without meat, but had a little flour left from our small stock of provisions. These being the first fish caught by any of the party, they insisted on our taking them. This we refused, but they insisted, until we were compelled to accept them.' He continues: 'I cannot say too much of the three noble men who were with us. They were firm, upright, reliable men, and, in addition thereto, entertained a religious belief, which they never violated. They did not partake of a meal without asking the blessing of God; they never rose in the morning or retired at night without offering a prayer. They all knew the country well, and were excellent guides and hunters. When they could not find fresh meat, they accepted the remnants from our scanty table with the greatest contentedness.'

"The Flatheads recognize Victor as their chief, an Indian of the same name being the chief of the lower Pend d'Oreilles. These two tribes usually accompany each other in their great hunting expeditions east of the Rocky Mountains. The heroism of the Flatheads in battle, and their good faith toward others, have been the theme of praise, both from priest and layman."

Speaking of the Cœur d'Alènes, the Governor says:

"The Cœur d'Alène Indians are under-estimated by all the authorities. They have some seventy lodges, and number about 500 inhabitants. They are much indebted to the good Fathers for making considerable progress in agriculture. They have abandoned polygamy, have been taught the rudiments of Christianity, and are greatly improved in morals and in the comforts of life. It is indeed extraordinary what the Fathers have done at the Cœur d'Alène mission. It is on the Cœur d'Alène river, about thirty miles from the base of the mountains, and some ten miles above the Cœur d'Alène lake.

"They have a splendid church, nearly finished by the labors of the Fathers, brothers and Indians; a large barn; a horse-mill for flour; a small range of buildings for the accommodation of the priests and brothers; a storeroom; a milk or dairy-room; a cookroom, and good arrangements for their pigs and cattle. They are putting up a new range of quarters, and the Indians have some twelve comfortable log cabins. The church was designed by the superior skill of the mission, Father Ravalli, a man of skill as an architect, and undoubtedly, judging from his well-thumbed books, of various accomplishments. Father Gazzoli showed me his several designs for the altar, all of them characterized by good taste and harmony of proportion. The church, as a specimen of architecture, would do credit to any one, and has been faithfully sketched by our artist, Mr. Stanley. The massive timbers supporting the altar were from larch trees five feet in diameter, and were raised to their place by the Indians, with the aid simply of a pulley and a rope.

"They have a large, cultivated field, of some 200 acres, and a prairie of from 2,000 to 3,000 acres. They own 100 pigs, eight yokes of oxen, twenty cows, and a liberal proportion of horses, mules and young animals.

"The Indians have learned to plow, sow, till the soil generally, milk cows (with both hands), and do all the duties incident to a farm. They are, some of them, expert woodcutters; and I saw at work, getting in the harvest, some thirty or forty Indians. They are thinking of cutting out a good trail to St. Mary's valley, over the Cœur d'Alène Mountains (on the route passed over by me). They need agricultural implements and seeds.

"The country generally, on both sides of the Cœur d'Alène river and lake, is rolling and beautiful. It is interspersed with many small prairies, all affording excellent grazing, and most of them adapted to crops. The rolling country could be easily cleared, and would yield excellent wheat and vegetables. I have no question that all the country, from the falls of the Cœur d'Alène to some distance above the mission, and thence to near Clark's Fork, a region of 3,000 or 4,000 square miles, is adapted to grazing and culture. A small portion will be overflowed by the melting of the mountain snows, and another portion will be occupied by the mountain spurs or isolated peaks, capable simply of furnishing timber and fuel.

"The Fathers state that a better site for the mission is furnished by a river flowing from the southeast into the western end of the Cœur d'Alène lake, and called by them St. Joseph's river. It is said to be larger than the Cœur d'Alène river, to have many prairies along its banks, and the country generally to abound in wood, grass and water.

"On the return of the Indians from the field above spoken of, I talked to them in these words:

"'I am glad to see you, and to find that you are under such good direction. I have come four times as far as you go to hunt the buffalo, and have come with directions from the Great Father to see you, to talk with you, and to do all I can for your welfare. I see cultivated fields, a church, houses, cattle and the fruits of the soil — the works of your own hands. The Great Father will be delighted to hear this, and will certainly assist you. Go on; and every family will have a house and a patch of ground, and every one will be well clothed. I have talked with the Blackfeet, who promise to make peace with all the Indian tribes. Listen to the Good Father and to the good brothers who labor for your good."

These details are drawn from the Message of the President of the United States to Congress, 1854-5, p. 416.

Accept, dear Father, my respectful homage, and believe me,
Your devoted servant and brother in Christ,
P. J. DE SMET, S. J.

Indians of the Rocky Mountains.

To Editor of the Précis Historiques, Brussels.[3]

St. Francis Xavier, Feb. 4, 1856.

Reverend Father:

I have just received a letter from Father Adrian Hoeken, dated October 18th, at the united camp of the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles, in the region of the great plains, east of the Rocky Mountains. The Indians had gone there to attend a peace council, held by order of the United States Government. Father Hoeken attended, at the express request of Governor Stevens of Washington Territory, who shows every regard to the Fathers, and whose reports to the President evince the lively interest which he feels in the improvement of the material condition of the Indians under our care.

The Blackfeet, Crows, Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles, Kootenais, and a great number of chiefs of other tribes attended the council. It is to be hoped that the stipulations of the new treaty will be ratified by Government. On the one hand, the Indians promise to remain at peace with each other; on the other, the whites and the Government to aid them by subsidies in educating their children, and by farming implements to encourage them to leave their nomad life and settle in a convenient spot on their own lands. It is to be hoped that the council will succeed in realizing this laudable plan.

Father Hoeken tells me that the Indians of our missions west of the Rocky Mountains (the Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles, Cœur d'Alènes, Kootenais, Kettle Falls Indians), continue, by their regular and religious conduct, to give the missionaries great consolation. He speaks also of the good dispositions of the Crows, Blackfeet and others east of the mountains. These Indians earnestly solicit missionaries. Colonel Cummings, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, who presided at the great Indian council, assured me, on his recent return to St. Louis, that all the tribes of the upper Missouri are devoted to us. He would gladly use his influence with Government for the success of our missions among them. Before setting out for the council, he expressed the wish that I should accompany him to the great Indian assembly.

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[3] From *Western Missions and Missionaries*, p. 292.

In a letter from Father Congiato, dated at Santa Clara, November 29th, that superior of the missions of California and Oregon, speaks of his visit to the missions in the mountains. It lasted three months. The following is an extract:

"The Fathers do much good in that remote region. Like his venerable brother, who died on the Missouri in 1851, Father Hoeken does the work of several men. He has succeeded in uniting three nations and a part of the Flatheads to live together under his spiritual direction.

"All was going on wonderfully well when I was in Oregon; now all is on fire. The Indians who live on the banks of the Columbia, from Walla Walla to the Dalles, have joined the Indians of northern California to make war on the Americans or whites, and commit great depredations. One of the Oblates (Father Pandory) has been massacred.[4] The last tidings which I received from the Mission of St. Paul at Colville, inform me that your Indians express their horror for the excesses committed by the Indians, and show no disposition to join them in the war. Pray for your fellow missionaries in Oregon."

Several papers in this country ascribe the origin of this war to the cruelties perpetrated by some whites on a peaceful and tranquil band of Indians. I do not think that our Indians will take the least part in the difficulties which have arisen between the Americans and the Indians of the Columbia. They will doubtless follow the advice of their missionaries, who will divert them from such a great danger and so sad a misfortune. Moreover, they are at some distance from the actual seat of war, and have had but trifling intercourse, if any, with the hostile tribes.

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[4] This was a false report.—Editor, *Western Missions and Missionaries.*

Do not forget me in your prayers, and obtain prayers for the wretched. I have just received a second letter from Father Hoeken from the Flathead village of St. Ignatius. He has several nations there. The conversions among the Indians have been very consoling and numerous in the course of last year.

In the name of all the Indians east and west of the mountains, he implores me to revisit them. The Blackfeet, Crows, Assiniboins, Sioux and others incessantly implore our aid. These nations are still very numerous. They number over 70,000 souls. Religious should, before all else, be children of obedience. It is the affair of our superiors. We shall never cease to aid them by our prayers, and commend them in a special manner to the remembrance of the pious.

CHAPTER IV.

PLANS FOR A SIOUX MISSION.

An excursion among the Yanktons — Quarters assigned — Talks all day and wrestles with the enemy all night — Baptism of head chief — His experience with a miraculous medal — A good Indian — Repulses sectarians — Letter from chiefs — The Indian Bureau consulted in regard to formation of a mission — Letters to public men — Nomination of Indian agents — Statistics of mountain tribes.

St. Louis University, March 22, 1866.

Major-General Sully,
Headquarters District Upper Missouri, Clinton, Iowa:

Dear General.— I received your kind favor of the 28th ultimo. You will excuse me for not answering it sooner. I had to postpone it till the arrival of the Superior of the Board of the University, who has been on a long absence. He has now just returned and your propositions, concerning Indian missions, have been taken up for consideration.

Allow me to return my sincere thanks for the kind and favorable feelings you express in your letter toward the Catholic missions in general. Your suggestion of establishing a mission at Fort Berthold among the three united bands of Mandans, Aricaras and Grosventres, and among the Sioux near Fort Randall, was highly approved and will be looked to. Owing to our numerous establishments and the great want of personal means, the design could not immediately be acted upon. It will, I hope, be done before long and as soon as practicable and when the proper persons can be prepared for carrying out the views proposed and with the permission of the proper civil and military authorities.

I intend leaving St. Louis on the 7th of April, on the *Fannie Ogden*. I hope I shall have the honor of meeting you on my way up the river. Should I meet the head men of the Santee tribe and the chiefs at Fort Berthold I shall do my best to encourage them.

With sentiments of the highest consideration of respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, dear General, etc.

Tribe of the Yanktons, in the vicinity of
Fort Randall, July, 1866.[1]

Very Reverend Father Provincial:

In this letter I shall give you a faithful statement of my mission among the Yanktons. I do not doubt in the least that your Reverence and the consulting Fathers will take under consideration the position of these good savages and their admirable disposition toward the faith. Permit me to go into minute details concerning all my relations with them. If the consolations are sometimes great in the holy ministry among the savages, I have also, at the station from which I write, shared in a good portion of human misery. The more fruitful were the days, the more miserable and exhausting have the nights been. The following recital will give you a faithful account of it.

Upon my arrival among the Yanktons, Indians and half-breeds welcomed me among them with the utmost good will. Every one expressed in particular his desire that I should come and share his lodge or cabin, as the case might be. As the families are usually quite numerous and their quarters rather cramped, and in order that I might have more free use of my time among them, I expressed my intention of occupying some little private abode, in whatsoever condition, where I might discharge in quiet my spiritual duties; say my early morning mass and recite my breviary. They had the very thing for me — a poor cellar (fifteen feet square) built of hewn timbers and covered with earth and long abandoned. It was serving as a junk shed for all the community and was full of rags, pieces of rusted iron, chips, planks, etc. This was all cleared away and the place swept out. My little effects were quickly transported thither, and in less than an hour I took possession, without the least doubt that I would spend several agreeable days there in the instruction of the Indians, and several tranquil nights in reposing after the fatigues and the great heats of the day. I had a long conference with the chiefs and their subjects concerning the motives of my visit; I answered all their questions, and it was prolonged well into the night. At last I said prayer with my new community, we smoked one last calumet together, and then every one, thanking me joyfully for my presence, withdrew to give himself up to repose under his own roof.

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[1] From the French of the Linton Album, p. 94.

Worn out by the heat of the day and the fatigues of the journey, I expected to enjoy a good sleep. I had reckoned without my hosts. I had been perhaps ten minutes in bed and was almost asleep, when I was awakened with a start. The dugout was swarming with famished rats; they came and laughed in my very face. Night is their particular domain and they make the best use they can of it in their own behalf. They carried on at a shocking rate. They were rummaging all my bags of provisions, and were about to begin in earnest the transportation of such of their contents as suited their purposes into their caves, when I stopped them short. To prevent the depredations of the rats, I hung my sacks to the posts of my mansard out of reach of any attempts on the part of these highwaymen. During this labor I felt myself assailed by another enemy, the flea. If he is not so formidable as the rat, he is more importunate and he attaches himself to his prey in a most tenacious manner. Often one is deceived into the consoling belief that he has put his finger upon him, but —— "he is not there." To be brief, I was awake and up all night, making play with my hands, fingers and nails to defend myself against the fleas and their comrades in evil-doing, the mosquitos, the bedbugs, the ants, the spiders, *et omne genus muscarum.* As you will perceive, dear Father, all is not gold that glitters. The more beautiful and consoling had been the day, among those good Indians, who lent such earnest attention to my words, the more sorry and troubled was the night. Take what precautions I would for the night, during my fortnight among the Yanktons, and with all my fruitful and consoling relations with them on each day — I spent all my hours instructing them and baptizing their little ones and those about to die — still each night I must go on the warpath afresh against the common enemy, the veritable scourge of this region. But of course, putting miseries and consolations in the balance, the latter outweigh as much as light surpasses darkness.

The results of my mission among the Yanktons have been very happy. I have baptized all the little children that were in the camp, about 100 in number, together with some fifteen adults, among whom I count the head chief of the tribe with his spouse. I think a little notice of the life and character of this head chief may please you. I will transcribe it from the notes in my journal.

On the 6th of this month (July) I baptized solemnly the head chief of the Yankton tribe, named Pananniapapi, or Man that Strikes the Ree. His tribe numbers in the neighborhood of 450 lodges, say 3,000 souls. He is a remarkable man, the descendant of a long line of chiefs recognized for their bravery in war against their enemies, but still more for their wisdom in the councils of the Dakota nation, which numbers 35,000 to 40,000 souls. I met Pananniapapi first in 1844. He recalled all the circumstances to me. I had at that time, he says, long talks with him regarding our holy religion. I exhorted him to pray the Master of Life to make him worthy to enter some day into the bosom of Jesus Christ, and become a worthy child of his Church. He has remained faithful ever since to the words I spoke to him upon religion, and has kept them carefully in his mind and heart. He has preserved with care and respect the large miraculous medal and has always worn it, full of confidence in the protection of the Mother of God, and he and all his tribe have participated in her mighty favors.

He recounted to me with primitive simplicity the benefits obtained from heaven by the intercession of Mary. Once, in 1853, he and all his camp were buffalo hunting in the vast plains of the West. It was the cholera year, and the frightful scourge of God broke out among the Indians, where its ravages were terrible. Thousands of them fell victims to it. Pananniapapi's camp was attacked in its turn and in one day thirty died. There was universal mourning and nothing but groans and weeping was to be heard anywhere. In the consternation of the moment, the head chief exhorted his people to have trust in God and apply to Mary. He placed the miraculous medal upon a new white parfleche, neatly painted. Surrounded by his people, he implored the succor of the Holy Virgin, the good Mother of the children of God. Pananniapapi embraced the wonder-working medal devoutly, and amid their pious invocations to Mary, which penetrated heaven, all the Yanktons, 3,000 in number, full of trust, kissed the medal after the example of their head chief. At the same instant every symptom of the malady disappeared and the cholera left them.

It gives me pleasure to add to this little tale the universal testimony which I have received to the character of the great and good chief Pananniapapi. He leads an exemplary life among his people. His charity is boundless. His position as chief brings him certain remunerative favors from the Government which would put his family in easy circumstances. He accepts them, and makes use of them solely to relieve the distress of the poor members of his tribe. He shares with resignation, nay, I may say with joy, the general needs. He wears no mark of distinction.

He has adopted the costume of the whites; his garments are humble, but clean. His bearing is at once modest and imposing. In his speech he is grave and imposing, and he is quick to take a point. His example is a model and lesson to all. Although sixty-five years of age and almost blind, he is always the first at work, whether in the field, the forest or the garden. The men, women and children of his tribe need no other encouragement. With axe, pick and shovel on their shoulders, they follow him everywhere eagerly, either to the forest or to the field. Such an example is rare, especially in a head chief among the Indians, so little accustomed to labor. They have over 800 acres under cultivation. The vast field was admirably tended, and promised a good ample crop.

The longer I stayed among the Yanktons, the more I was struck with the manners and bearing of Pananniapapi. His modest exterior, his words full of wisdom and prudence, brought to my mind an ancient Patriarch or Nestor of the wilderness. During his younger years, he distinguished himself in war by deeds of valor. He bears the honorable marks upon him, but without ostentation. A three-inch arrowhead remained in the small of his back for sixteen years. But he has distinguished himself still more by his wise and moderate counsels upon the most important affairs of his nation. At the death of him who was head chief before him, he was chosen unanimously to fill his place, and he has ever discharged the duties of it with honor and for the best interests of his people.

My arrival in the thirty-mile square Yankton reservation was a real day of rejoicing for Pananniapapi. He received me with all demonstrations of the sincerest joy, and eagerly renewed his invitation of twenty-two years before, that we should come and establish ourselves on his land and open a mission there for the instruction of children and of the members of his tribe. He has often had to resist the artifices of Government agents and employees, who have sought, unasked, to impose missionaries of their own particular sect upon his tribe, by force and against his remonstrances. Pananniapapi has always resisted all their attempts. When they asked him his reason for refusing his consent to their benevolent and charitable intentions toward his tribe, he replied modestly, "I am thankful for the occasion you give me to tell you all my thought with reference to this important matter. My opposition to your plans is a sincere and conscientious duty to the Great Spirit, which I desire to discharge. I made up my mind on this subject twenty-two years ago. I wish to put the instruction of the youth of my tribe into the hands of the Black-robes; I consider them alone the depositaries of the ancient and true faith of Jesus Christ, and we are free to hear and follow them." The ministers answered him: "The religion of the Black-robes may be good, but ours is the best; why not rather accept ours?" The chief replied, "I have told you that my resolution goes back a great many years. In the old Church the Mother of Jesus Christ is honored. When the cholera attacked us in the desert, all my camp was put under the protection of Mary. She deigned to come to our rescue; I always wear her medal." And he told them the story of the miraculous occurrence in the plain. He continued: "Besides, like ourselves you have your wives and children; they possess your hearts and are your principal preoccupation. You wish to come and settle among us. That is to gather wealth and enrich your wives and children at our expense. The Black-robe has neither wife nor children. His heart is undivided. All his care is for God and the happiness of the people that surround his cabin and the house of prayer. Since my first talk with the Black-robe I have had no other thought but to embrace the ancient religion of Jesus Christ, if I can make myself worthy. My mind is made up." His answer has always been the same to all renewals of the question. Pananniapapi has remained imperturbable as to his choice of a religion for twenty-two years. To-day he enjoys the distinguished happiness of having been regenerated in the holy waters of baptism with his wife Mazaitzashanawé under the patronage of St. Peter and St. Anne.

As soon as I came he renewed his petition with ardor, to obtain a Catholic mission among the Yanktons. In my long experience with Indians, I have never seen so durable and admirable a persistency. He spent all the time he could spare with me. We had long talks together upon religion, and he was most attentive.

May all the tribe of the Yanktons, after the example of their great chief, become worthy to enter hereafter into the sweet fold of the Divine Shepherd! May the long-desired Catholic mission be established among these children of the desert, under the illustrious patronage of the Holy Virgin, to be led to the knowledge of the word of her Divine Son, the only door of salvation!

Come, Reverend Father, to the aid of the Indians by your holy sacrifices and prayers, for the fulfillment of their desire — a mission among them. The land which the Yanktons occupy is the doorway to the vast territories of the Dakotas or Sioux, who are 35,000 to 40,000 in number. In my various meetings with the Sioux tribes, they have always treated me with much respect and kindness and given close attention to my words.

I have the honor to be, with the deepest respect and the most sincere esteem

Very Reverend Father Provincial, Revæ Vae Servus in Christo,

Copy of Letter of Yankton Chiefs.

Greenwood, D. T., July 26, 1866.

Reverend Dear Father De Smet:

I send you a few lines from the chiefs of the Yanktons. They say when they were at Washington their Great

Father promised them a school and teachers, and now it is seven years and they have seen nothing as yet. Doctor Burleigh had a school for his children. There is another religious [teacher] that wants to come and remain with us. He wants to teach us the Santee language, but we do not want them. We want no other but you and your religion. The other wants to learn us how to read and sing in the Indian language and which we all know how to do in our own way. What we want is to learn the American language and their ways. We know enough of the Indian ways. I am now very old and before I die I want to see a school and the children learn how to read and write in the American language, and if you will try and get with us, I will be very happy. Our agent has not arrived as yet, but when he comes I will have a long talk with him and will send you an answer to what he says.

I will say not much until the agent arrives and then I will tell him what I have to say and what I want and then I will send you a few lines. After you had gone, all my Indians have had plenty of buffalo. We have made a surround from this place. I think the Great Spirit will take pity on us and grant all our requests. Hoping that we may hear and see you soon, we remain, ever yours.

THE MAN THAT STRIKES THE REE. X
LITTLE SWAN. X
FEATHER IN THE EAR. X
MEDICINE COW. X
JUMPING THUNDER. X

[3](I write this for the Chiefs, who have requested me so to do.)

J. B. CHARDON, for Indians.

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[3] Note in parenthesis by Chardon.

St. Louis University, Nov. 24, 1866.

Honorable Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the "Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the year 1865," which you had the great kindness to forward to me, and for which I return you my most sincere thanks.

I avail myself of the present occasion to lay respectfully before you a little incident of my late missionary visit among the Indian tribes of the upper Missouri. At the special request of Pananniapapi, or "The Man who Strikes the Ree," the head chief of the Yankton tribe and several of his braves who reside at the Yankton Agency below Fort Randall, I remained some time amongst them. During my whole stay, I found them all very attentive and respectful. Since my first interview with Pananniapapi, in 1843, he had nourished a longing desire, as he expressed it, "to see the old Black-robes (the priests) reside among his people, to instruct the Indian youth and to teach them the saving truths of Christianity." On my recent visit last summer he manifested anew this his old desire with an urgent request to come and locate on the land reserved for his tribe. The chiefs, having made up their minds, in regard to the religious profession of the teachers of their children, had been opposed hitherto to the establishing of schools by teachers of other denominations contrary to their own choice.

I could not give at that time a positive promise to Pananniapapi, the affair having first to be proposed to our own Board of Missions in St. Louis, and the practicability of its execution having first to be discussed. The Yankton Indians are under treaty with the Government, and a school fund, if I have been well informed, has been established in favor of their tribe consisting, I am told, of about 450 lodges, or 2,500 souls.

I would feel grateful for information on the following points: First. Should our Board of Missions agree to grant a Catholic missionary establishment, as expressly desired by the chiefs of the Yankton tribe, will it meet with the approbation of the Indian Bureau in Washington?

Second. In case it meets with the consent of the proper authorities, I would beg to be informed as to the conditions and stipulations of the Yankton Treaty in regard to the formation and allowances for aforesaid schools.

With sentiments of the highest consideration of respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.

Honorable L. V. Bogy,
Com'r of Indian Affairs,
Washington, D. C.

St. Louis University, July 30, 1868.

Dear General:

According to promise you have a right to a letter from me. I shall ever remember your extraordinary kindness to me whilst in the upper country. Since I left Fort Sully I suffered greatly from the unprecedented atmospheric heat. I had made up my mind, after my arduous trip to the hostile bands on the Yellowstone river, to take a few days' rest at St. Mary's Mission, among the Potawatomies, in Kansas, The thermometer at that place and in the shade, ranged from 104 to 109°. Of course, I availed myself of the coolness after the first good shower, to proceed hastily to St. Louis, which I reached a few days ago. I find the heat here more moderate, still it continues to be excessive and I am under great sufferings and in real danger. Deaths from the heat are very common and are of daily occurrence.

At Omaha I had the pleasure of entertaining the Right Reverend Bishop O'Gorman last mission in the upper Missouri, principally among the various Indian tribes. I have exposed to him the great need and want of a Catholic chaplain to visit the various military forts along the river and attend to the spiritual welfare of the numerous Catholic soldiers they contain. He felt moved at the representation made, but owing to the great scarcity of priests in his immense district, I doubt much whether he will be able to grant any assistance in this respect. At this moment the Archbishop is absent from St. Louis. At his return I shall expose the case to him in earnest terms and at your particular request. With some certainty, or at the least, good hope, I can announce to you that a mission of our Society will be established on the new contemplated Indian reservations, in all probability among the Yanktonnais (the Two Bears band) who number over 700 lodges. From this establishment, in case of no regular chaplain being appointed, a Father will be able to visit yearly all the military posts on the Missouri. Should any suggestion occur to your mind on this subject, please inform me. I shall do my best and take great pleasure to bring it about. When last at Fort Sully, I informed you of my intended trip to Europe. Under urgent circumstances two Fathers have left a month ago to perform the duties intended for me. Should you have any commands or orders for the Old World, I shall with pleasure communicate them to my friends, who will promptly and readily fulfill the requests. Any other commands from here in books, etc., I shall, with pleasure, attend to.

I intend shortly to write to good Captain Duffy and family. I procured two little libraries of very interesting books for his dear young children and shall send them by the safest and best occasion. I have carefully kept the address of his son, Master James, and shall soon write to him. A beautiful prayer-book and other books are bundled up and ready to be forwarded to Rhode Island.

Please present my best respects to Mrs. Stanley and remember me to your dear little daughters.

Most respectfully, etc.,

General D. S. Stanley,
Fort Sully, D. T.

St. Louis University, Sept. 9, 1868.

Dear General:

I heard to-day of the arrival of General Sherman and paid him a visit at his office. I represented to him the case of removing the Upper Missouri tribes in the vicinity of Forts Sully and Rice, to the neighborhood of Fort Randall, adding its objections and difficulties. The general showed me the map intended for the Indian reservation. It is about as large as the whole State of Missouri and extends from Fort Randall, above Fort Sully. The upper Indians, he added, "may select any spot, even opposite Fort Sully, if they choose." I learned that General Harney has the entire control of the reservation and that $200,000 have been placed at his disposal, to help the Indians through the coming winter. Of course, you will see General Harney. Your great experience, advice and direction will be of great service to him and result in the welfare and happiness of the Indians.

Try your best to induce my brother, Two Bears, to make a good selection, not far away from Sully. Should a Catholic mission be established, and I have good hopes it shall, I would like it to be in his neighborhood, according to the promise I made him. From a letter I received lately from Colonel Otis Two Bears appears to me in great distress, as few animals are found in the prairies. Should you see him, try to console him. In my answer to the colonel I inserted a long paragraph to him.

Present my best respects to Mrs. Stanley, to Captain Duffy and family. I received a very fine letter of his son, James, from Rhode Island.

Should you find out a good locality for a mission, confer on the subject with General Harney and give me information and advice in due time. I hope we shall not meet with any opposition in Washington, if the sentiments of the Indians are well known and duly represented by yourself and Harney. On the subject of missions, as far as my experience goes, the Indians have always pronounced in favor of the Black-gowns, or Catholic missions. I truly hope and pray that their expectations may be soon realized and that the light of faith may redound upon them.

Most respectfully, etc.,

D. S. Stanley, *Brevet Major-General,*
Fort Sully, D. T.

P. S.—I hope my letter of the 4th instant has reached you.

St. Louis University, July 16, 1869.

Honorable Sir:

In writing the other day to Mr. John B. Motley, solicitor of patents, etc., I requested him in case of meeting you to present you my kindest respects and regards and my most sincere congratulations for the high and important office to which our worthy President has called you. I entertain the fullest convictions that the appointment will redound to the general welfare of our red brethren throughout the Union, and particularly among the numerous tribes of the Far West. I shall always remember with true satisfaction and pleasure the honor I have had of visiting the Sioux tribes in your company and that of General Sully, in the summer of 1867. Accept my sincere thanks for the many favors and great kindness you bestowed on me on that occasion.

The answer I received from my friend Motley, in regard to his kind compliance with my request, encourages me to address this letter to you to let you know my future intentions in regard to a visit to the Sioux tribes in the Upper Missouri country. In my visits last year among the friendly and among the hostile bands on the Yellowstone river I was everywhere received with marked tokens of kindness, respect and confidence. Two Bears and other principal chieftains in their speeches at the council at Fort Rice, expressed the desire of my forming a missionary station in their midst. In particular they entreated me to that effect. I made no formal promise to them and have answered simply, "that I would do my best to bring it about." I learn from various sources that Two Bears, chief of the Yanktonnais, and several others have been anxiously expecting me. I arrived in St. Louis on the 7th ult., leaving the cool climate of Belgium and stepping so suddenly into the fullest heat of our Missouri summer, that I have been rather suffering ever since. However, I have not abandoned the intention of visiting the Sioux tribes in the neighborhood of Forts Sully and Rice as soon as I shall be able and feel strong enough for the trip.

The situation of affairs in the upper country having somewhat changed in regard to missionary establishments, permit me to lay before you my plan, if admissible. Your views on the subject will be gratefully received. My visit to the upper country would be to select a place where a missionary station may be commenced early next spring and where manual-labor schools may in time be erected. In my visits last year I found all the half-breeds, who are mostly Catholics, very sanguine on the subject and several of the most prominent chiefs in the council at Fort Rice made the same request to the commissioners.

Honorable Sir, I have another important matter to lay before your consideration — a letter from the Reverend Father Dielo, which I just received from St. Mary's Mission, Kansas. I feel particular interest in said mission because it was the Potowatomies, now of St. Mary's, among whom I first commenced my missionary career. This mission has been in a flourishing condition for about thirty years. At various times the establishment has been visited by most distinguished and eminent men of the United States. Senators Doolittle, Foster and Ross, General Ewing and a host of others, have at various times honored it with their presence and pronounced the establishment "A model mission " and the schools " a perfect success." The Friends or Quakers now threaten to replace Doctor Palmer, for many years the efficient and qualified agent of the Potawatomies, who has given satisfaction to the greatest number of Indians in his agency. The schools of the mission continue (The rest of the letter not copied in Press Book.)

St. Louis University, Jan. 6, 1870.

Honorable R. Campbell, *St. Louis, Mo.:*

Honorable Sir.— Having the honor of your acquaintance for these several years past in my capacity of missionary among the Indian tribes; knowing the deep interest you take in the welfare of the Indians, and in your present capacity as member of the Board of Commissioners instituted by the Government for the interest and civilization of the Indians, allow me the liberty of laying before you my intention of establishing a mission among the upper Sioux tribes, should it meet with the approbation of the Board of Commissioners.

A few words of explanation may be here necessary. I visited various bands of Sioux in the summer of 1868. Several considerable portions of Indian tribes about Fort Sully and Fort Rice were friendly and entertained peaceable dispositions toward the Government and the whites. The presence of the hostile Sioux bands being highly desirable and necessary, to meet the commissioners at Fort Rice, in order that a treaty of peace might be concluded, I offered my services which were accepted. Accompanied by Mr. C. E. Galpin, in the capacity of interpreter and a band of friendly Indians as scouts, we proceeded across the plains in a western direction. After about fifteen days' travel we found the hostile bands to the number of several thousand, encamped on the banks of the Yellowstone river ten miles above the mouth of Powder river. They had been apprised of my approach by some of the scouts and I was met by hundreds of warriors clad in their finest apparel and war ornaments. They welcomed me into their country and amidst the greatest rejoicings conducted me to their common camp, consisting of about 1,000 lodges and composed of Ogallalas, Brûlés, Blackfeet-Sioux, etc. The day after my arrival I held a council with the Indians, attended by thousands — a space of over an acre was surrounded by Indian lodges and served as the council hall which was filled to its utmost. I made known to them the benign intentions of the Government, in their regard. I was listened to with apparent great attention and received the answers from the various orators appointed for the occasion. On my return to Fort Rice I was accompanied by a number of deputies from the hostile bands. They attended the great council of the Government commissioners and signed the treaty of peace.

Several of the chiefs present at the council, in their speeches to the commissioners expressed a desire to be attended by *Black-robes* or Catholic priests for their instruction and that of their children. For years past, during my missionary visits to them, and more particularly in the summer of 1868 at Fort Rice, have I been earnestly requested by the chiefs to make a missionary establishment in their midst — I made them a formal promise to that effect, if in my power, to interest myself in their behalf. I entertained the hope of seeing them the following summer in 1869, but being called to Europe on business and on account of subsequent sickness on my return to the United States, I have been compelled to postpone my visit until next spring.

In conformity with the wishes of numerous Indians and half-breed families, I feel desirous to establish a mission for their welfare in some well-suited locality. I must here humbly observe that our means for such an undertaking are very limited and inadequate. Should we be able to bring the design about and should our services be acceptable, my principal object in addressing you, Honorable Sir, is to humbly beg you to present our case to the honorable board of commissioners of which you are a distinguished member. Should means be accorded for the undertaking of our contemplated mission, it shall be gratefully received and conscientiously applied in accordance with the views of the Government and in favor of the Indians.

Allow me to make the observation, that our Catholic missions among the Potawatomies and Osages, during their whole existence for over twenty years, have always been in a flourishing condition and have merited the approbation and praise of the various superintendents and agents of the Government. The usefulness and good done by our missions in the Rocky Mountains (Montana and Idaho) are highly spoken of in late letters I received from General Sully.

Should reference be necessary, allow me to name General Sherman, Commissioner Parker, Generals Stanley, Harney, Terry and Sully.

With sentiments of profound respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, Honorable Sir, etc.

St. Louis University, Sept. 15, 1870.

Honorable Sir:

I received your very kind favor of the 9th instant. Please accept my most sincere gratitude. Your letter has been for two days on my table, but [has been delayed] owing to bodily indisposition and very urgent matters to attend to, and hoping the return of my Superior to confer with him on the subject in question. He is still absent, but I can no longer defer my answer.

A simple statement of our intention to erect a mission among the Upper Missouri Sioux tribes early next spring may here be necessary. I passed the months of June and July in visiting the various military posts and Indian reservations from below Fort Thompson to Grand river. I was kindly and well received by the various Sioux tribes and bands. I had to listen to their usual little complaints and apprehensions, but upon the whole they appeared to me pretty well pleased and peaceable. Generally they seemed anxious to have me establish missions among them. On the occasion, I answered all their queries and gave them the best advice in my power with the promise of doing what I could to return soon among them to establish a mission for their welfare and the education of their children.

At my return to St. Louis, in the beginning of last month I gave an exposé, to my Superior and his consultors of my visit and mission among the various Sioux tribes. They readily approved and resolved on the establishment of a mission among the aforesaid tribes, without deciding about the locality. During the consultation a letter was read from General Stanley, in which he advised, stating his motives, establishing the mission in Peoria Bottom, where General Harney raised buildings fifteen miles below Fort Sully and where the little band of Yellow Hawk habitually resides. (North side of the Missouri river.)

I will here state that, personally, I am in favor of establishing the mission on the Grand River reservation, from the fact that it will bring the missionaries in closer contact with a greater number of Indians and give them more facility to visit the hitherto hostile bands in the interior. I was assured while at Grand River that the bottom lands four miles above and six miles below the agency are susceptible of cultivation, with plenty of timber and good grazing around. My proposition will, no doubt, meet with the approbation of the Superior and his board of whom I am a member.

My health has been rather feeble for some time past, owing to the excessive summer heat in the upper country. I trust the coming cool weather will again brace me up and prepare me for the new Sioux mission which for years has been dear to my heart.

I feel truly grateful, and find no words to express my gratitude and heartfelt thanks for your extraordinary kindness and confidence in allowing me to propose "some suitable person, who will be acceptable to myself and the Society I belong to, for appointment by the President as United States agent at Grand River." The motive you express is highly appreciable, paternal and just. Certainly a good understanding between the agent and the missionary will always produce the happiest results among the people for whose welfare they devote themselves.

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With sentiments of the highest consideration, etc.

Honorable E. S. Parker, *Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.*

St. Louis University, Sept. 27, 1870.

Honorable Sir:

On the 12th instant I received a very kind letter from the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in which he desired me, "to name some suitable person, who will be acceptable (to myself and to the Society I am a member of) for appointment by the President as United States Indian Agent at Grand River, on the Missouri;" stating as a reason and motive: "it seeming very desirable that any agent sent by the Government to the care of those Indians should be in full harmony and sympathy with the local missionary or teacher."

Previously to the reception of the Commissioner's letter, it was decided upon by the Board of Fathers regulating the affairs of the missions of the Society, to establish a mission among the upper Sioux tribes in Dakota, early next spring. The reservation at Grand River, containing the greatest number of Sioux bands, it is likely this point will be selected for our future establishment.

I felt highly honored and most grateful for the confidence and kindness expressed in the honorable Commissioner's letter, to wit: in allowing me to make the proposal of the agent of Grand River reservation. On the most estimable and highly-prized authority and recommendation I proposed to the honorable Commissioner, as agent for Grand river, Doctor Wm. F. Cody. His profession, his talents, qualifications and services, no doubt entitle him highly to the position and I hope he may be willing to accept.

In the absence of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, permit me to renew my first application and request and to place the matter directly under your consideration, with the hope that it may prove acceptable.

With sentiments of the highest consideration, etc.

Honorable Secretary Cox,
Washington, D. C.

St. Louis University, March 27, 1871.

Honorable E. S. Parker, *Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.:*

Honorable Sir.— This letter I intend both as personal and official. Ever since we traveled in company in 1867, to promote the welfare of the Indians, you have inspired me with the highest regard and respect.

I need advice and direction as to the course and endeavors in starting our future mission on Grand River agency. From reports I have received, I understand that the locality may be changed. The land at Grand river is rather poor for farming purposes, with hardly any timber around. I have little means at my disposal. What assistance may be expected from the Government? or how may it be obtained? We have nothing else in view than to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Indians.

U of M

My health, for some time past, has been rather on the decline. I hope, however, I shall be able to undertake the trip, toward the 10th or 12th of next month, and introduce two reverend companions among the various bands at Grand River.

When I was in Washington, January last, I was not sufficiently posted as to the actual situation or statistics, of some of the Catholic missions in Idaho, Montana and Washington Territories. I then promised to forward to you, what information I should be able to obtain. The Superior of Indian Missions, the Reverend Joseph Giorda, Society of Jesus, has sent me a sketch, with some remarks, as to the number of converts among the various tribes, under his charge, which I consider as implicitly reliable and beg to be allowed to present it to your kind attention and consideration. I hope, that as soon as practicable, the benevolent intention of the President will be established in favor of these missions, to wit: "That the agent and the missionary or teacher, may work in unison, for the welfare of the people under their charge and care."

In Montana Territory, I commenced the missionary work thirty years ago. All the missions and missionary visits to the various tribes of that extensive territory, have been attended exclusively by Catholic clergymen.

In the Flathead agency, we have two regular mission establishments. One of these is among the Flatheads, in Bitter Root Valley. The total number of these Indians is about 450 — all Catholics. The agent, Mr. Jones, is well liked, and merits the confidence, both of the Indians and missionaries. The Indians possess some very good farms and are fencing in considerably. It is hoped the treaties between Governor Stevens and the Flatheads in 1855, and in 1869 with General Sully, may be strictly carried out. Hitherto, these treaties have been rather disregarded, or have remained unfulfilled. Father D'Aste, one of the missionaries, writes to me: "As to the removal of the Flatheads from Bitter Root valley, I think it may be obtained without great difficulty, by granting the Indians an immediate compensation. They have been often disappointed, and place no reliance whatever on promises of agents. Their removal to Jocko reservation, among the Upper Pend d'Oreilles or Kalispels, would best suit the Flatheads, having a common language, but precautions should be taken to prevent the whites from settling on the reservation."

The second mission of the Flathead agency is on the Jocko reservation (Montana Territory), for the Upper Pend d'Oreilles and numbers about 1,500 Indians, all Catholics, including some Kootenai Indians.

The Sisters of Charity have opened a manual-labor school for girls, on the reservation. The average number of teachers is twenty. The Government used to pay $1,200 a year for the maintenance of the teachers and their pupils—for several years past this allowance has been withdrawn by previous agents.

In the Blackfoot agency (Montana Territory), the Catholic missionaries are the only ones who have paid missionary visits to the Indians. I commenced the work thirty-two years ago, which has been continued ever since. Over 2,000 Catholics are scattered among the various Blackfoot tribes. The Catholic agent, McCullow, was removed when about commencing a school and church. He was succeeded in the agency by Jesse Armitage, strongly opposed to the Catholic religion, who preached to the Indians. As I learn from good authority his repute in Montana has been far from enviable.

In Idaho, I commenced the Cœur d'Alène mission over thirty years ago; it numbers over 400 Catholics and all are very exemplary. They are industrious and cultivate the soil, but lack instruments of agriculture. If the missionaries had the means at their disposal they would soon have flourishing schools, for the Indians express a great desire to have their children educated. Seltis, their chief, wrote an interesting letter on the subject a few months ago to the Sisters of Providence in Walla Walla.

The Nez Percés number a good many Catholics, but on account of the fact that the mission was first commenced by missionaries of the Presbyterian denomination, the agency was assigned to them.

At Colville the Kettle Falls Indians number 606 Catholics. The missionaries of said section attend the Spokan Indians, who number over 300 Catholics. The former agent at Colville, Mr. Harvey, though not a Catholic, aided the missionaries in their efforts to promote the welfare of the Indians and was highly popular and beloved by them. They beg that he may be reappointed. His successor among the Spokans gives no satisfaction, neither to the missionaries nor to the Indians. The chief, in his effort to prevent the spread of licentiousness among his people, was threatened with jail.

The Lower Kalispels number 403 Catholics; the Okinagans number 107 Catholics; the Snaiclist [?] number 229. The above are principally attended from Colville Mission. The Kootenais and some of their allied tribes, along the northwestern line of the British dominions are visited by Catholic missionaries and number several hundred converts. They are generally very tractable people and are very attentive to religious instruction.

In the Yakima reservation (Washington Territory) we have another mission attended by over 500 converts. Some fourteen small tribes are visited from that mission and come generally under the appellation of Yakimas among the whites: They are: the *Tyapenish, Wishgam, Stockamsin, Klikitash* (*Goilgoilpam*), *Uniapam, Uinnachapam, Sipam, Chamnapam, Nagchespam, Silapam, Winash, Pshuannapam, Kookchentla and Enteaktla.* They are about 4,000 in number.

In connection with the Yakima mission Father Giorda writes to me: "It is truly painful to state, that the present agent, Reverend Mr. Wilbur, will not allow the Catholic missionary to stay with his flock on the reservation. In consequence the priest is located outside the reservation, and even Wilbur, though unsuccessfully, tried to order him from the place." The missionary, Father Caruana, is personally known to me and is highly estimable for zeal and talent in the noble cause to which he has devoted himself for years past.

It must be here noted that about twenty-nine years ago the Yakima mission was first undertaken by Catholic missionaries and remained under their control until the Indian war broke out in Oregon, during which the mission was burned by the militia, an act highly disapproved by the public at that time. Is not this a parallel case with the Nez Percé mission, which was restored to the Presbyterian missionaries because it was first commenced under their direction? Might not the same favor be asked from the Government in regard to the Yakima Catholic mission? The number of Catholic converts among the Yakimas exceeds by far those of Wilbur.

Though Dakota Territory, along the Missouri river, has been divided into several sections or agencies, bestowed on the Episcopalian missionaries, this, I suppose, will not prevent me or my companions from visiting my Catholic Indian brethren and friends to give them the consolation of their religion. Among the Yanktons many are Catholics, including their principal chief Pananniapapi. At Wetstone, Cheyenne and all the stations along the river most of the half-breeds are Catholics and under instruction, and numbers of Indians of the Sioux bands along the Missouri, in my yearly visits to them, have always been very attentive to religious instruction and have often asked for Catholic teachers.[8]

The Aricaras, Mandans and Grosventres have recently made application to be attended by us. From my acquaintance with them for many years past I feel inclined to attend to their request as soon as I shall be able, and in the hope it may meet with your approbation.

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[8] I have baptized several thousand of their children.—*Author's Note.*

Pardon me, Honorable Sir, in addressing this long letter to you for your kind attention, consideration and advice. For these thirty years past we have labored among the benighted tribes of the Far West with the only view of promoting the knowledge of God amongst them and to add to their temporal welfare. We have divided with them the little means placed at our disposal, and often have we joyfully shared their poverty and privations.

We hope and trust that, in accordance with the benevolent views and intentions of our worthy President, in the above-mentioned missions of Montana, Idaho and Washington Territories, "Agents and teachers might work in unison, in promoting to the best of their power, the welfare and happiness of the peoples confided to their care."

With sentiments of profound respect and esteem, I have the honor to be

Note by Father De Smet on letter-press copy.— I have given a copy of this letter to the commissioners of the Indian tribes. It has received no response from them nor from the Indian authorities in Washington.

CHAPTER V.

MISCELLANEOUS MISSIONARY NOTES.

Some remarks on Protestant apostles — A plea to the Council of Bishops — Promises made to the Indians — Appeals from the tribes — The soliciting of alms — Transportation of mission supplies — Blackfeet repel a Presbyterian — Colonel Vaughan on Catholic missionaries — One Jesuit mission secured — Protestant tricks — The Potawatomies in Kansas — Routes to the mountains — A report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs — Agents and missionaries — Victor, the Flathead chief — His invitation to the Pope — Failing health and remembrance of early days and old friends.

YOUR Paternity will observe that the Indian Territory, compared with others, is well filled with this sort of apostles; the reason is very simple.[1] These nations having exchanged their lands with the United States and the Government has made treaties with them containing stipulations providing for the education of their children. It is to enjoy the favors of these treaties, which give $500 to $600 per year to each minister, that such great crowds of these people are hastening thither. They have other great temporal advantages besides, for the Protestant propaganda of New York, Boston, etc., furnish them means to erect houses, schools and everything necessary. These gentlemen keep school for a small number of children, and speak now and then of the gospel to those who may sometimes come, from curiosity or by chance, to listen to them. Aside from this, they work hard — but for what? To fill their coffers and storehouses. They raise cattle in large numbers, get a fine crop and sell their produce at a high price. After spending a few years in such a way as to amass a good competency, these gentlemen retire, disgusted apparently with their lack of success in the conversion of the Indians, and go elsewhere for the rest of their days to repose in peace and abundance.

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[1] From letter of 1839 to the Father-General, referring to a table from the American Almanac of 1838, showing seventy-four Protestant ministers among reservation tribes, and none among the others.

Most Reverend Archbishop:[2]

As the Right Reverend Prelates of the United States are about to assemble in the first National Council in Baltimore, it appears to me a fitting occasion to address to your Grace a few lines on a subject which, in my humble opinion, is of the highest importance, since on it depends the salvation of thousands of our poor, bereft and benighted brethren of the wilderness. The spiritual destitution of these poor children of nature attracted the attention of the Right Reverend Bishops in one of the early councils; and their paternal solicitude thought fit to place several of the Indian missions under our care. To carry out an undertaking so highly recommended, the Fathers, at four different periods, made collections in several dioceses. These means, together with the yearly allowance made by the Association for the Propagation of the Faith at Lyons (continued up to last year but now suspended), as well as what we derived from our own private funds in Europe, enabled us to establish the following missions: First, amongst the Flatheads and Mountain Indians are two Fathers and four Brothers engaged; second, among the Pointed Hearts or Cœur d'Alènes are two Fathers and two Brothers; third, among the Kalispels or Ear-rings [Pend d'Oreilles] and Kettle Falls Indians on the Columbia are two Fathers and two Brothers; fourth, among the Carriers, Okinagans and Sioushwaps in New Caledonia are two Fathers and one Brother; fifth, in the Willamette valley at St. Francis Xavier's mission-house and other stations two Fathers and three Brothers. Besides the missions of the Far West three missions are in operation in the Indian Territory east of the Rocky Mountains, to wit: Among the Osages, the Potawatomies and the Miamis — the two first have each an academy directed by nuns, Ladies of the Sacred Heart and Sisters of Loretto, seven Fathers and six Brothers are engaged in these three establishments. These three establishments receive moneys from the education fund for the Indians — $50 for every child (clothing and boarding included) being granted by Government to these various schools. The Government pays likewise for the erection of schools to a certain amount. If these Fathers had more means at their disposal they might increase their operations among the Indians to a greater advantage. A Father left St. Louis eight days ago to establish a mission among the Winnebagoes in the diocese of Monseigneur Loras — another Father and two Brothers are shortly to follow him. This mission will likewise draw from the education fund.

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[2] Addressed to Archbishop Eccleston of Baltimore. Dated St. Louis, April 26, 1849.

In addition to these already established missionaries will leave next May for the numerous tribes of the Upper Missouri. Here, as in Oregon, the missionaries must be left to their own private and scanty resources — the Sioux, the Poncas, the Mandans, the Aricaras, the Assiniboins, the Crows, the Blackfeet, the Snake Indians, etc., have asked repeatedly for Black-gowns. I have resided about ten years among the Indians. I have visited the tribes I here mention. I deem it a duty incumbent upon me to state, that I have the full conviction that our holy religion would be readily embraced by thousands of these, our benighted brethren, if timely assistance in missionaries and in temporal means were afforded them. Europe in its actual condition cannot help the missions, or at most very slightly. The holy work having been thus prosperously advanced hitherto and the demand for missionaries yet so frequently made by these poor Indians, I have taken the boldness, Most Reverend Archbishop, to address these few lines on this important subject to your Grace, particularly at this favorable moment, when the spiritual fathers of the Church of the United States are about to assemble for the well-being of their spiritual children, spread far and wide over the land. The Indians at all times have been dear to their paternal hearts. Permit me, Most Reverend Archbishop, to observe, that in order to maintain the actual number of missionaries and missions and to establish new ones, wherever they may be most needed, it would be advisable to devise some plan of obtaining the necessary funds, either by establishing an association for the propagation of the faith among the Indians, or such, should it be thought expedient, as the wisdom of the Right Reverend Bishops may think most proper to adopt.

I am with profound respect and esteem, etc.

St. Louis, April 26, 1849.

St. Louis University, Feb. 2, 1850.

Very Reverend Father-General:

The approach of the months of April and May always reminds me of the promises that I have made to the Blackfeet and Crows, and some two years ago, as well, to the Poncas and the numerous tribes of the Sioux. This year again (1849) at various times, these poor unhappy tribes have gotten word to me of the pain they feel at having their hopes frustrated and their ardent desire of at least an early accomplishment. On the other hand, your Paternity is but too well aware how poor in subjects is the vice-province of Missouri, and how impossible it is for it to furnish the missions, when it has barely sufficient for itself. It is therefore men that we need. You know better than I, Very Reverend Father, what their qualities should be; but as I am somewhat acquainted with the ground, I will take the liberty of pointing out a few. A fair judgment and a firm will to suffer much, though without gaining much ground, since, in the new lands which it is proposed to evangelize, the obstacles are greater and more numerous than among the nations on the west of the Rocky Mountains. It is not a conquest but a painful labor — many sufferings, few consolations. If you had at your disposal any subjects whom such a prospect might terrify, we might still keep them for our colleges and send out some of our men who are able to endure such fatigues.

Your Paternity, in writing me on the 29th of August last, had the kindness to inquire regarding the state of my health. I am well, thanks be to God. I suffer but little from my rheumatism of late, and I feel fit to undertake and endure afresh all the privations connected with such expeditions. A sign from your Paternity will make me take incontinent the road to the plains of the West, where so many thousands of souls are groaning under the empire of Satan. The hope of baptizing so many thousands of poor little children, and of preparing for death so many poor old people, whose dispositions are generally admirable, inspire me with the necessary courage to return to a post which I have always regretted.

The establishment of missions seems so much the more urgent to-day, when the Mormons (a sect of fanatics) and the French socialists under the lead of Cabet are proposing to go and form new States in the midst of the great desert. The Mormons are there already, 50,000 to 60,000 in number. Cabet is negotiating at this moment to go and occupy a large territory east of the Rocky Mountains. The poor simple savages will be their dupes, unless we forestall them and implant as much as possible the truths of our holy religion in their hearts.

St. Louis University, Sept. 19, 1852.

Right Reverend Doctor Miège, S. J., *St. Mary's Potawatomi Mission:*

Right Reverend and Dear Father.— I hope you will have received my letter of the 17th ultimo, and we are expecting your answer, on which depends the sending of good Father Van Hulst. He is detained in St. Joseph's College, where he is to give a retreat to the clergy of Kentucky. It has been promised to give another to the seminarians in Carondelet, Mo., so that he might be ready to leave here toward the end of October, together with a good brother. Let us know your wish in due time. Your long-lost trunk, as you may have been told already, has been recovered. It was received a few days ago in St. Louis and placed in charge of Mr. Duncan MacDorvell of Weston, who will forward it to St. Mary's in one of his wagons. The cape you borrowed at St. Xavier's College, Cincinnati, has been returned; they missed it greatly. You will find in the trunk an instrument for Brother De Vriend, a gift from Cincinnati; some papers belonging to Father Duerinck; several late numbers of the *Civiltá Cattolica,* and Dr. Bragg's mustang liniment with the prescriptions, said to be very good and recommendable.

As the Father of the Indian tribes west of the Rocky Mountains, I must acquaint you with the letters I have received from the upper country, all speaking most favorably of the dispositions of your far-distant children and of their anxiety to be instructed. Mr. Meldrum, the Crow interpreter, and considered as a chief in the nation, having resided over thirty years in their midst and having become fully identified with them, writes as follows: "The Crows speak of you frequently and are anxious to be baptized and to become Christians. I consider them candid and we frequently converse on the subject."

Zephyr [Rencontre], the great Sioux interpreter, in the name of the different bands of Sioux Indians, numbering thousands, begs most earnestly, and urges the arrival of missionaries among that powerful nation: "Remember," says he, "the holy waters of baptism have flowed on the foreheads of hundreds of our children." Several other letters from the gentlemen of the American Fur Company speak to the same effect and in equally strong terms in favor of missions among the Sioux.

The great chief of the Assiniboin nation sent me a lengthy and beautiful speech, in which he chiefly aims to urge our arrival amongst them, promising withal, "that should means be wanting, if he has it in his power, a portion of the annuities due the Assiniboins shall be set apart for that purpose." "I am convinced," he adds, "that buffalo are getting scarcer, and if my people do not learn something and get the knowledge of the word of the Great Spirit, they will vanish with their game and disappear from the face of the earth. I am getting old, and would like to see your good works commence before I die. I shall then die contented. My people wish you to come and invite you with all speed. I know you wish the ignorant Indian well, and hope you will act up to our expectations, and think about us and how we are situated."

Right Reverend and Dear Father in Christ, in giving you these extracts, I am performing a duty. I have endeavored by word of mouth to explain to you the forlorn and unhappy situation of these poor people and how ardently thousands among them are desirous to receive instruction. You know my own personal feelings on the subject; "*non recuso laborem,*" if, perchance, I am not judged unfit to labor in so holy an undertaking. I believe ample means could be obtained. The Association of Lyons would, no doubt, yearly contribute toward it. The Government, as General Mitchell assured me, would make a grant out of the yearly annuities, and the American Fur Company and all the whites in the Indian country can and are willing to contribute. It is indeed high time to think seriously about this affair, for ere long Protestants will take it in hand and crush the good dispositions of the Indians and trample under their foot the scattered seeds sown in that benighted region.

We are all well, I recommend myself, etc.

Dear Sir.[8]—After many journeys in the deserts of North America I am at last in my native land, happy to be able to express to the benefactors of the poor Indian all the gratitude of the missionaries.

Since my last departure from Belgium I have traveled prairies where no mission had ever been established — indeed, where no European probably had ever been.

We ascended the Missouri for about 730 leagues, and crossed a plateau of over 100 on the upland that separates the waters of the Yellowstone from those of the Missouri. From the Yellowstone we proceeded southwest marching about 300 leagues to the Black Hills and Wolf Mountains, spurs of the Rocky Mountains. We left these hills at the great road leading from the Rocky Mountains to California.

On the 2d of September, 1851, we were on this highway trodden by the whites hastening these latter years to the gold mines. The road is fine, broad, and perhaps the longest in the world. On the track of the emigrant caravans you can travel easily from the frontier settlements to the Pacific. This immense avenue is like a barn-floor swept by the winds. No blade of grass springs up, so unceasingly is it trodden by the feet of thousands of Americans and Europeans hastening to California. Our Indians, who had seen only pathless wastes, crossed at most by a hunter's trail, thought, on beholding it, that the whole nation of the whites had passed over it, and that the land of the sunrise must be depopulated. They could hardly believe me when I told them that the multitudes who had gone were scarcely missed.

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[8] Letter I, Second Series, *Western Missions and Missionaries.* To the Chevalier DIEUDONNÉ STAS, *Editor of the Journal de Bruxelles,* Brussels, June 30, 1853.

Providence has supported my feeble courage, guided my steps, fructified the seed of the gospel in lands which had not yet received them. After traveling many hundred leagues I saw what good could be done among these wandering tribes, always at war, without consolation in misery, because they scarcely know of the hopes of eternity. With the grace of God I hope to return next spring with Bishop Miège, the vicar-apostolic. We will be able to found missions for those nomad tribes on a soil fertile enough to support them, and thus removing occasion of war, let civilization, with the light of the faith, dawn on these wastes.

The limits of a journal do not permit me to enter into details on this expedition to the Great Desert, on which I have yet published but one letter; but I intend to publish more in the *Précis Historiques*, published by Reverend E. Terwecoren, at the College of the Society of Jesus, Brussels. Besides a notice on the Mormons, a new sect, dating from 1826, but threatening to play in America the part of the Moslem in Asia, I am preparing notes to develop to Europeans the almost unknown state of religion in that vast portion of the world, and to leave authentic documents on the rising church of the wilderness. I will vary these historical details with notes, written in the desert, on geology, zoology, botany, the manners, religion, and language of the Indians.

This will show what civilized Europeans are too apt to forget, that Catholicity, by the very force of her missions, contributes to the civilization of nations and the development of science. The Government of the United States knows it and encourages our labors. The good to be accomplished is in every respect immense. The Catholics and recent converts need priests to preserve the faith, the pagans to learn the good tidings of the gospel. The small number of ministers of the Lord there does not suffice for the 4,000,000 Catholics, and for all the Indians who desire ardently the visit of a Black-robe, to instruct and baptize them. I have come to Europe to appeal to generous hearts.

I will express one more desire, and express it frankly. I come, too, to solicit alms. I am not unaware that Belgium is constantly visited by missionaries from America, the Indies, and the East. I am conscious that the benevolent can scarcely satisfy these repeated solicitations. But Europeans cannot conceive the immense want of pastors experienced in these countries, to prevent defections, convert the heathen, form missionaries, establish schools, build churches, etc.

Consent, Sir, to contribute by your estimable paper, which has elicited so many generous works, to make known this two-fold object of my coming to Europe, where I shall probably remain till the close of September.

Your obedient servant, etc.

St. Louis University, Jan. 12, 1855.

W. A. SMETS, Esq., *Utica, N. Y.*:

Dear Friend— * * * *

I have been, thank God, in the enjoyment of good health ever since I had the pleasure of seeing you in New York. My heart, I must acknowledge, remains still with the Indians. I frequently receive moving messages from them in which they urge my return. I am happy that even here I can be of some service to them, at least temporally, by providing our missionaries with all the necessary articles they may stand in need of to carry on the good work among the various tribes they are evangelizing. Our number being proportionably small in St. Louis I have not been able hitherto to be replaced in the station I now hold. However, like the commodore of old, "I do not give up the ship," and I fervently pray, if it be God's will, to be allowed to pass the remainder of my days in the Far West, with the poor, abandoned and much-abused children of nature. Thousands still roam over the plains and in their native forests without expectations for the future and without spiritual consolation and comfort.

Please present my best respects to all, etc.

St. Louis University, April 9, 1856.

Colonel Alfred Cummings, *Superintendent of Indian Affairs, St. Louis, Mo.:*

Honorable Sir.— I have taken the liberty of addressing to you, as Commissioner of Indian Affairs in St. Louis, a few lines regarding the Indians, in whose welfare I have seen you invariably manifest so much devotedness and fatherly care. Indeed, I feel the more assured in taking this liberty from having experienced on several occasions the kind assistance which you have always shown yourself ready to give to our missionaries, who labor in the midst of this poor benighted people in order to promote their happiness.

The missions in the Rocky Mountains need no word of praise at my hands. The Honorable Governor Stevens and the gentlemen of his party, in their report to the Government, speak of these missions in the most flattering terms. They say that these tribes are by far the best and most peaceable Indians of the great desert; and in their reports promise to promote the interests of these tribes with their Great Father in Washington. You have yourself, no doubt, witnessed the happy influence which our missionaries exercise over the minds of these rude, uncivilized Indians. For years they have shown a great predilection in our favor and have constantly expressed a wish and desire to see us in their midst. Major Culbertson knows well their feelings in this regard. In the course of the year I feel confident we may be enabled to gratify [them] in a matter so dear to their hearts.

Some time ago I received a catalogue of goods ordered by the Reverend Adrien Hoeken, one of the missionaries who attend to the united bands of the Flatheads, Kalispels, Flatbows and Kootenais, settled at present in the vicinity of the great Flathead lake. The settlement is not far distant from Fort Benton and there is a good wagon road to it. The goods ordered will probably cost about $1,000. Of this amount, however, I regret that it is not in my power to furnish more than $300. For want of means, therefore, I find myself necessitated to select only those articles which are most needed for the mission. I would feel very grateful indeed should you secure the permission of sending these goods to Fort Benton along with those designed to be sent by the Government to the upper Indian tribes. Had the idea occurred to me, while in Washington City, I would have applied for this permission to the Honorable Mr. McClelland, Secretary of the Interior, and to the Honorable Mr. Manypenny, Commissioner of Indian Affairs. We are under the greatest obligations to these gentlemen for their constant attention and kindness in whatever regards the missions under our care.

With the greatest respect and esteem, I remain, etc.

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[4]In February of last year the Government made us very advantageous offers for the erection of one or several establishments among the Blackfeet or other tribes. Not receiving any positive response from the superiors, some Calvinists or Presbyterians later accepted the Government's proposition, and a minister, attracted by the money, even started off for the distant mission with his wife and children. These last were the proof for the Indians that the minister did not belong to the genuine Black-robes, and so they would

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[4] Extract from letter in French to Father-General, June, 1857.

not receive him nor have anything to do with him, and that gentleman and his suite lost no time in getting back to the States.

Below is the translation [into French] of the letter written me lately by Colonel Vaughan, the Government agent. It is dated May 20th. The colonel is a Protestant.

"Reverend and Dear Sir.— Before my departure for the Blackfoot territory, where I have been appointed agent by the Government, I take the liberty of writing you upon a subject of vital importance to the welfare of the Indians intrusted to me, and to the progress of civilization. You are aware that I have filled the office of agent of the United States Government among the Indians for fifteen years. During all this time I have noticed with the greatest interest that the efforts made by good Christians to establish missions and schools, to instruct the Indians in spiritual and temporal matters, have contributed the most to civilizing and pacifying them. Furthermore, I take pleasure in testifying that the Catholic Church, to which you belong, has everywhere obtained the most pre-eminent success. The Catholic missionaries have always succeeded in gaining the Indians' hearts, in controlling their brutal outbreaks and ameliorating their condition in every respect.

"Being fully convinced of this, the object of this letter is to obtain your intercession with your superiors for the formation of a mission among the Blackfeet. Such a mission I am sure would advance the interests of the Government and those of the Indians at the same time.

"You know also that the Government's treaty with these Indians on Judith river in the Blackfoot territory makes ample provision for the support of the establishment by yearly money payments. Hoping that my request may be successful, I have the honor to be, etc.,

"ALFRED VAUGHAN."

St. Louis University, April 1, 1858.

Reverend F. Congiato, S. J.
P. C.:

Reverend Dear Father.— I received your kind letter with the inclosed of Father Ménétrey — I sincerely thank your Reverence for all the kindness you express in it. I have only a few minutes to write you and on a subject highly important to the Rocky Mountain missions. I just received a letter from Lieutenant Mullan, a Catholic and very much in favor of our Indian missions. He tells me "I have seen the chairman of the Indian Committee and he says that all the Indian treaties made by Governor Stevens are to be confirmed, and that in these treaties the most ample provision has been made for schools, farms, utensils, etc. All of which, in the mountains, will be under the eye of the Jesuits. They are going to establish a farm and manual-labor school on Sun River, for which there will be near $45,000, and from all appearances Father Hoeken will have all to do with it, if he will avail himself of it!" I begged the lieutenant to call on Father Accolti in San Francisco and to let you know immediately of the whole of this affair. Father Hoeken should be authorized to accept; the Blackfeet and Crow Indians would be thus secured to the Catholic cause. He has all jurisdiction from Bishop Miège on this side of the mountains. I hope my letter on this subject will have reached him long ago.

Should this affair be neglected, Protestants will try immediately to obtain all the advantages which the Government now offers so abundantly for the progressing of those poor missions. Orders came to St. Louis last evening from Washington to send up by the first boats to the Blackfoot country oxen, cows, plows and other farming utensils, all to be placed in the hands of the Fathers, should the thing be accepted. All the agents in that region are also in our favor. Some three months ago I wrote to his Paternity in favor of the new missions east of the Rocky Mountains. I hope to obtain a favorable answer. I will try all [I can] that one or two Fathers and a few Brothers might be sent on that expedition. It will at once secure the Indians on the western side. Father Hoeken being on the ground and in the neighborhood of the Blackfeet should be allowed at once to proceed in this glorious undertaking. Lieutenant John Mullan can tell you more about it. Please see him and confer with him on the subject; or should you be unable, Reverend Father Paresce will take, no doubt, all the interest in this great offer from Government, and which will make the missions on both sides altogether independent in a temporal view.

I am trying my best at present to obtain some little things in St. Louis for the missions in the mountains, which I will forward by the first boats in the course of the present month. I will probably accompany one of the boats and pay a visit to the Indian tribes of the Plains. Several of the officers of the army have asked me to accompany the expedition to Utah. Should the application come from headquarters, I will accept. The Provincial, who is now absent, has already granted permission.

Remember me to all the Fathers in California and pray for me, etc.

P. S.— Excuse the great hurry in which this has been written. I should have added the following, from the letter of Lieutenant Mullan: "Suffice it for me to say that the day is nigh at hand when we shall be enabled to see carried out our most sanguine wishes and hopes regarding these many little bands of Indians in the mountains," etc.

St. Louis University, Feb. 24, 1862.

Bishop Timon:

Right Reverend Bishop.— I returned to St. Louis on the 22d instant. Your kind favor of the 12th was handed me and agreeably to your request I answer it. The number of

Catholic Indians in Kansas among the Osages and Potawatomies, etc., is approximately, I should think, not far below 4,000. I have written to the Superior of the missions to be correctly informed on the subject and shall forward his answer to your Lordship when received. The *Catholic Magazine,* Baltimore, of 1849-50, edited by the Very Reverend C. White, D. D., published a number of letters of Reverend Fathers Bax and Gailland, missionaries among the Osage and Potawotami Indians, giving detailed accounts of their labors and of their success. Since about fifteen years, the agents of the Government in their yearly published accounts, though Protestants, have always reported most favorably and commendably of the Catholic missions in Kansas. The piety, fidelity and zeal in the St. Mary's Potawatomi mission have always been conspicuous among a great number of the Christian Indians. Since Kansas has become a State and since civilization has crept in and with it vice and drunkenness and all mischief, there is great danger for the existence and continuation of those missions; and "the Protestant trick of damning by faint praise," as your Lordship says, may be again renewed on this occasion. "It is easy to show that Protestant unscrupulous cunning worked whatever failure there was." As far as my own experience has gone in regard to Protestant missions, east and west of the Rocky Mountains, they have proved a complete failure. Nothing remains of their missions in Oregon and Washington Territory but rich and extensive tracts of lands, enriching the *ci-devant* missionaries, their better halves and their little ones. 0 is their number of converts, and mighty little do they care.

I must make a rough guess at the number of Christian Indians west of the Rocky Mountains. Including all that has been done under the Right Reverend Bishops and by the secular clergy, by the Oblate Fathers and by the Jesuits, over 6,000 must have been regenerated in the holy waters of baptism. The Cœur d'Alène mission numbers between 600 and 700 souls. The Pend d'Oreille and Kalispel mission numbers from 1,200 to 1,500. The Flathead tribe contains about 600; the Kootenai tribe number about 1,000, nearly all baptized, and though for sixteen years since their baptism without a resident missionary, the zeal and fervor of the Kootenai Indians as true Christians has never abated. Their Christian simplicity, their sincere piety, their charity and their love of justice, are admired by all who frequent the mountains.

This day, I take the liberty to forward to your Lordship *Les Missions de l'Orégon.* Letters Nos. III, XVII, XX, XXII, XXXII and others may contain some edifying points. Governor Stevens of Oregon, in his report to the Government, published in 1854-55, upon his explorations and surveys for a railroad route to the Pacific ocean, speaks most highly and favorably of our Rocky Mountain missions, of the Flatheads, Kalispels, Pend d'Oreilles, Cœur d'Alênes and Kootenais.

These missions are all in great danger. The rich mines are now greatly attracting attention and thousands of whites will soon be on the move to take possession of them. In my *Oregon Missions,* published in 1847, page 125, I said: "Poor, unfortunate Indians! They trample on treasures unconscious of their wealth. They would tremble, indeed, could they learn the history of those numerous and ill-fated tribes (in South America, etc.) that have been swept from their land to make place for Christians who have made the poor Indians the victims of their rapacity." Unhappy times, I am afraid, may befall the Indians of the mountains before long. Two years ago, whilst I was with the army in Oregon, the transportation of liquor toward the newly-discovered mines of Colville on the Columbia was immense and the baneful effects on the poor, simple savage were soon felt.

The reports which I receive now and then from our Fathers east and west of the mountains are satisfactory and consoling. The improvements which they make at their respective stations are slow, but yet they have been uninterrupted. The missionaries are at present more comfortably lodged than they were formerly; their arduous labors, however, allow them but little time to enjoy the sweets of a convenient dwelling. The churches too are now more commodious and more substantially built, so that the severity of winter is less dreaded. Their fare is not always of the most delicate kind, but it is nourishing, abundant and wholesome. The Indians are in general good and tractable and after baptism often zealous and fervent; yet their early habits and their roving disposition make it difficult, if not impossible, to accustom them to the manners of a more civilized life. Their nature should, perhaps, be less blamed for this than the circumstances of their location.

The Indian, like every other being, stands in need of food to support life and of raiment to protect him against the inclemency of the weather. If these accessories cannot be found in the neighborhood, he is obliged to go in search of them elsewhere; and until by some means or other this obstacle is removed, the same difficulties will continue to exist and produce the same baneful results; for it can easily be imagined that it is impossible for the missionaries to maintain at their own expense whole tribes of Indians. Consequently they must see their flocks scattered and exposed to the ravenousness of the wolves without enjoying the benefit of that spiritual aid so necessary to a Christian's life.

Our endeavors, however, have certainly not been fruitless. The great number of souls that are every year cleansed in the regenerating waters of baptism; the sick who are attended in their dying hour and strengthened with the holy sacraments for their journey to the other life, and finally the hardships and destitution of the missionaries endured for the love of him who laid down his life for his brethren: all this, I say, is fruit enough (whatever Protestants may say of the "no permanent result of Catholic missions") and prepares the missionaries, if not for a reward in this life, for imperishable laurels in the next world.

Mr. John G. Shea of New York intends to publish shortly a little biography of the life and death of a holy Cœur d'Alène woman, with several edifying letters on the mission Indians of the Rocky Mountains. If applied to by your Lordship, he might give a great deal of information such as you may require.

With sentiments of profound respect and esteem, I have the honor to remain, etc.

St. Mary's Mission, August 30, 1866.[5]

Reverend Father:

On my return from my mission among the Indians of the plains, upon the upper Missouri, or in the new Territories of Nebraska and Montana, I have visited the Mission of St. Mary among the Potawatomies. I have found my dear brothers in Jesus Christ in good health. There are four Fathers and ten Brothers of them. The mission stretches several hundred miles westward, and they water this vast vineyard of the Lord with their sweat, and cultivate it with the greatest zeal and with much success. Every year thousands of emigrants are coming and settling in this fertile and beautiful region. In the last four years, Reverend Father Dumortier has established twenty-four stations among them, and built four stone churches. He makes regular visits over a distance of 150 miles every six weeks. The flourishing condition in which I have found the two Indian schools has filled me with consolation and joy. That for boys is under the care of the Brothers and contains 150 boarders, that for girls is under the maternal care of the respectable Ladies of the Sacred Heart and contains over 100 boarders. They are considered the two model schools of the State of Kansas. I propose to give you here an idea of the present position of St. Mary's and

[5] From the French of the Linton Album, p. 99.

of the salutary influence which it continues to exert in the land under the new *régime* which governs it.

St. Mary's does not offer any very great news items. It continues its little march, without making much noise; tranquil amid the rapid changes at work, both within itself and among the surrounding population. The Potawatomies, who profess Christianity, are faithful to their religious duties — their assiduity at the divine office is the admiration of all who know them. They take particular pains with the instruction of youth; the two schools are accordingly very flourishing. Last year, the Vice-President of the United States, Mr. Foster, and Senator Doolittle, honored them with their presence; examined diligently the greater part of the pupils, and sent to Washington a testimonial which is no less the faithful expression of an upright and magnanimous heart, than it is glorious for the Catholics. The Americans are so well aware of the value of the religious education that we give young people, that they constantly importune the directors of the schools for the admission of their children. All the places are taken, and if the houses were doubled they would be filled at once.

The use of liquor, which is generally the curse of the Indian tribes, seems to moderate in proportion to the ease with which it can be obtained. In the last three or four years no noteworthy crimes have been committed among them. A good number of families are living in easy circumstances — their farms and dwellings may be compared with those of the Americans around them. The railroad which is in a few years to unite the States of the Orient to those of the Occident, crosses the Potawatomi territory. It brings them several great advantages; it raises the price of land, facilitates the exchange of products and furnishes openings for remunerative work to the industrious young men. Many American and European colonists are settling among the mission Indians. Some marry their daughters, some buy their surplus lands. Some have built close to the mission, attracted principally by the vicinity of the church and schools. St. Mary's, as I have already observed, is the centre of a vast field of missionary operations; their apostolic labors, among the Catholics, Indian and white, extend upward of 150 miles from the residence.

Divine Providence seems to have shown itself always favorable to the Mission of St. Mary, especially amid the tempests which have seemed to threaten its existence. Lately, at the most critical moment perhaps in the nation's history, it has given the establishment, in the person of their excellent agent, Mr. Palmer, not only a sincere friend but also a wise and devoted protector. By means of his care, the nation has just concluded a treaty with the Government which seems to confirm the residence of the Potawatomies in this country. By the provisions of this treaty, each Indian has received his portion of land. Those who wish to become citizens and are found worthy by a commission established for the purpose, may do so immediately—minors are obliged to wait until they are twenty-one — meanwhile they are prohibited from selling their lands, and have a right to the school privileges. Those who are of age, but who, either from misbehavior or from lack of industry, are deemed unworthy to be citizens, are obliged to wait some time and to deserve this honor by industrious life and irreproachable conduct. May the Immaculate Virgin, whom the Potawatomies have chosen for patroness, continue her puissant aid to them, amid the difficulties and dangers to which they are constantly exposed on the part of their enemies.

Accept my most humble respects and believe me in union of your holy sacrifices and prayers,

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University of St. Louis, Nov. 11, 1866.

My Reverend and Dear Father:

I received yesterday your kind letter of the 4th of this month. I think the holy providence of the Lord, who sent three more missionaries to this immense portion of his vineyard, where the needs are indeed great and where you will be received with open arms by our dear brothers in Christ.

You ask me for information upon the continuation of my voyage to the Rocky Mountains. I will give you here briefly the details of my last two long voyages to those remote missions:

In 1863 I tried to return to Benton by steamer with a large cargo for the missions in the mountains, at the special desire of our dear missionaries in these places. The water in the upper part of the Missouri was low this year and the steamer was obliged to discharge all her cargo and put the passengers off in a forest about 300 miles from Benton. An express was sent to Benton and I wrote to the Reverend Fathers Giorda and Imoda, then in the mission of St. Peter among the Blackfeet, to come and take care of the cargo and the charge of two Italian Brothers. We waited about three weeks for a response amidst the greatest dangers from savage bands, enemies of the whites. Every day we were on the alert and in an attack from a large number of Sioux, two of our men were severely injured.

I finally received a response from our reverend and dear Fathers, who announced to me that it was an impossibility to send me help. I was obliged then to do my best to get the effects to them and to accompany the two good Brothers to the mission of St. Peter.

The season advancing, and not wishing to return by way of the Missouri because of the great dangers from the Indians, I was obliged to take the sea voyage of the Pacific, pass the Isthmus of Panama and return by way of New York to St. Louis.

My journey this year, as far as the stage of water is concerned, was more favorable. We reached Benton where I hoped to find Father Giorda or some one of the Fathers to take care of a precious cargo that I had made great efforts to procure for them. A new war of the Blackfeet against the whites had compelled the missionaries of St. Peter to abandon that mission and repair to the mission of St. Ignatius, on the west slope of the Rocky Mountains 200 miles distant. They told me the circumstances and the condition of the country in which they were and stated that it was impossible for them to take possession of the effects and begged me to dispose of the cargo at the house of some inhabitant of Benton. The cargo contained objects precious to the churches and were for the use of the Indian missions. Altogether their value amounted to a large sum of money. I have never yet received the least news whether these objects have reached their destination.

I enter into these details to give you the uncertainties of the route of the Missouri for reaching Benton and the missions in the mountains.

I shall not return to Benton next spring. If the good Lord will grant me health, and with the permission of my superiors, I will make a visit among the Yanktons, a tribe of 3,000 Indians, belonging to the Sioux nation, which is very numerous. They are on this side of the mountains about 1,800 miles from Benton.

As to the price of passage upon the steamers from St. Louis to Benton, it amounts to $300 for each passenger; and for all that he brings beyond fifty pounds he pays from fifteen to twenty cents per pound.

Until this year I have always had my passage with my effects *gratis* upon the steamers of the Fur Company of St. Louis. This company is to-day dissolved and it is, consequently, very doubtful if I shall meet again with such a favor inasmuch as the companies are constituted principally of Protestants. I cannot, at this time, give you the least assurance that there will be a diminution in the price, nor do I yet know the names of the steamers that propose to risk the voyage to Benton the coming spring (1867).

The voyage from New York to Idaho and Montana, by way of Panama, San Francisco and by the Columbia river, is long, but it is easier and more sure and is made in less time than by the Missouri river. The voyage by way of the Missouri, if made favorably and without the least obstacle, takes ordinarily three months. By way of the Pacific it takes from New York to Panama ordinarily nine days; from there to San Francisco, twelve days; from San Francisco to Vancouver, on the Columbia river, four days; from Vancouver to Walla Walla, three to four days; from Walla Walla to the Mission of the Sacred Heart among the Cœur d'Alènes, six days. If I have been well informed on the subject of this journey, they grant a diminution in price upon the steamer from San Francisco to Walla Walla. The Reverend Fathers Accolti or Congiato will be able to give you information upon this point.

* * * * * * * * * *

I recommend to your holy sacrifices and prayers the new mission which I hope to be able to establish next spring immediately after the opening of navigation of the Missouri. My mission among these Indian tribes last summer has been for me a source of consolation. I visited principally the Yanktons, belonging to the Sioux nation, the Minnetarees, the Aricaras, the Mandans and the Assiniboins. I had the happiness to regenerate in the holy waters of baptism over 500 little children and a good number of adults, among the latter Pananniapapi, head chief of the tribe of the Yanktons, composed of 450 lodges or nearly 3,000 souls. He asked urgently that a mission be permanently established among them. Pray the Lord to grant a good personnel and the necessary funds for this new enterprise.

The country of the Yanktons is the key to the entrance of the numerous Sioux nations which number from 35,000 to 40,000 souls.

In union with our holy sacrifices and prayers, I have the honor to be, etc.

St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo., September, 1867.

Honorable Sir:

I hope my second letter from Sioux City in July last has been received. I arrived in St. Louis on the 13th ultimo, after an absence of four months. At Leavenworth (12th ultimo) I had the honor to meet the Peace Commissioners and hold a conference with them, and was kindly requested by all the honorable members to accompany the expedition. Sickness has prevented me of accomplishing the request and fulfilling my promise.

At my return to health, I avail myself of the first opportunity to write to you and to render my account of expenses and outlays of my visit among the Indian tribes of the Missouri, as recommended in the commission I received from the Department of the Interior on the 2d of March of the present year.

When in Washington last February I received from the department the sum of $2,500 to defray my necessary expenses and outlays for the men who accompanied me on the expedition. I herewith account for the money I have expended on my trip, to the best of my knowledge and recollection; the sum amounts to $1,576.70. This balance in favor of the Department of the Interior I am ready to refund upon the presentation of the order I shall receive.

All the recommendations I received, in my commission from the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs, I have tried to carry out faithfully and to the best of my power and I trust may prove available to the Indian tribes I have visited.

Allow me to add a few lines on my late expedition among the Indians of the Upper Missouri, at Yankton agency and its vicinity. I met most of the Indians of the Yankton tribe, numbering about 2,500. They are all true friends of the whites. They are in a prosperous condition with regard to agriculture. The chiefs begged me to establish schools amongst them, for which a proper yearly outlay will have to be established before it can be undertaken. At Fort Thompson I found over 100 lodges encamped, composed of Brûlés, Yanktonnais and Two Kettles. At old Fort Sully, over 200 lodges were encamped, composed principally of Blackfeet-Sioux, Two Kettles, Brûlés, Yanktonnais, Yanktons, Sans-arcs, Minniconjous and Ogallalas. At Fort Rice over 500 lodges awaited the arrival of Generals Sully and Parker and myself. The remainder of the tribe of Yanktonnais were here assembled, together with bands of Têtes-coupées, Hunkpapas and Blackfeet-Sioux. At Berthold we met the three united and friendly bands of Aricaras, Grosventres [of the Missouri] and Mandans, who have always remained faithful and have strictly adhered to the Laramie Treaty, held in 1851. At Buford we met a good number of chiefs and braves, belonging to various bands of Assiniboins.

General Sully did me the favor to communicate to me his reports to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs before he forwarded them and I concur in every statement he has made concerning our intercourse with the various tribes of Indians. The Indians in all their speeches and in the private conversations I held with the chiefs who frequently visited me possessed friendly dispositions toward the whites and a strong determination to keep aloof from the war bands. Their complaints have been faithfully noted down for transmission to the Department of the Interior. It is my candid opinion, should due regard be paid to the just complaints of the Indians, should their annuities be delivered in due and proper time, and implements of agriculture be supplied to them and should they be dealt with honestly and kindly by agents and other persons in the employ of the Government, the bands above mentioned will be kept friendly to the whites, and the warrior bands in the Upper Missouri plains will gradually and soon join the peaceable tribes.

As to placing them on one or two great reservations, [illegible]tience, on the part of the Government will be necessary.

It must be the work of time, or at least of a few years. The Indians we met were disposed, together with their agents, to select suitable reserves for farming on their own ground or country they claim. A good number of families among each band showed favorable dispositions to go to work at once. Should their efforts prove successful, in the first, second and third years, the example of the working class will then be followed by the greatest number or the entire tribe, and once understanding the great advantages of agriculture and the raising of stock and subsisting and tasting of the fruits of their labor, they might later be more easily induced to go on one or two great reservations, in imitation of the Choctaws, Cherokees, etc.

From old Fort Sully I sent out several Indian expresses to the hostile bands to come and see me. Over 100 warriors of the Hunkpapas (a great war band) came to Fort Rice and awaited the arrival of Generals Sully and Parker and myself during ten days. Their families being in want of provisions, they returned to the plains for their buffalo hunt. They left word for me, in particular, with Messrs. Galpin and La Framboise (interpreters) that they were very anxious to confer with me, and showed, as reported by the two gentlemen, strong dispositions toward peace.

Should my health permit it is my intention and desire to return to the Upper Missouri country early next spring and to visit principally the war-parties. I shall do my best to carry out the views of the Government in regard to the Indian tribes and to dispose these deluded and unhappy people to measures of peace with the whites. To promote my purpose and intention, a simple permit, on the part of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, would be very acceptable to me.

With sentiments of the highest consideration of respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.

To the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,
Washington, D. C.

St. Louis University, Sept. 4, 1868.

Dear General:

I received your very interesting letter of the 14th ultimo and return you my sincere thanks for your kind remembrance of me. I am happy to learn that your dear family are in the enjoyment of excellent health. If your dear little daughters were to visit St. Louis they would be noticed with admiration, and all the mammas would wish for their children a climate like that of Fort Sully and its neighborhood.

A word on the "Cannon Ball" you launched from your headquarters. It has been rolling and rolling all over the country and was noticed in all the Catholic papers, both American and German. As I learn, the ball is now rollicking among my acquaintances in Belgium and Holland and by this time must have reached Rome. I must make you accountable and be grateful at the same time. The great praise you gave me was truly little merited on my part. The article has been extensively read and has been well received by all parties. No doubt it will do much good to the Catholic missions.

I dread the consequences of the new outbreak along the Platte and its tributaries and fear it may extend anew among the upper tribes of the Missouri and Yellowstone plains. I place, however, great reliance on the numerous friendly bands of Indians in the vicinity of Forts Sully and Rice. They have been always so well cared for and so well advised by their respective and fatherly commanders, I hope their example will be imitated and followed by their wilder brethren of the plains.

I read to-day in the Missouri *Republican*, that the Sioux in the upper Platte country have refused to join the Cheyennes and Arapahos in their actual depredations and murders against the whites.

General Sherman is still absent from St. Louis. At his return I shall lay all your reasons before him, regarding the

Indians in your district and around Fort Rice. Their going to Fort Randall cannot reasonably be expected. I think General Harney does understand this affair fully well and I hope will attend to it, if in his power. He had left St. Louis before I received your letter.

I hope, General, you will keep your promise of honoring me now and then with a letter. Your letters will be always most welcome. I shall continue to remember you in the holy sacrifice of the altar and all that is dear to you and daily offer up to the Lord your good desires and resolutions. Renew them often and always with a full confidence and reliance on the goodness, mercy and grace of our Lord and the powerful protection and assistance of the ever blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, the refuge of all who invoke her in their need.

The same day your letter arrived I received one from our worthy friend, Captain Duffy. I was happy to learn that his lady and children are well. I intend, shortly, to write to him. I trust the package of books forwarded by Mr. Fox has reached him by this time. Two of the books I have inscribed to you.

Please present my best respects to Mrs. Stanley and to Captain Duffy and family.

Most respectfully, dear General, your humble and obedient servant,

Major-General D. S. STANLEY,
Fort Sully, Dakota.

St. Louis University, Nov. 18, 1870.

Hon. E. S. PARKER, *Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.:*

Honorable Sir.— I have been closely and intimately connected with the Potawatomi Mission in Kansas ever since its existence, and was one of the founders of said mission, always taking the deepest interest in its success. I see from a recent paper that "but twelve or fifteen agents remain to be selected, and these will be named as soon as the various religious bodies consulted have presented their choice." Under the above consideration and under the newly-adopted method of the President of the United States in regard to the Indian agencies, to wit: "That there should be a good understanding between the acting agent and the missionary or teacher for the welfare of the Indians under their control," etc., I have been very particularly requested by the missionaries who superintend St. Mary's Mission among the Potawatomies in Kansas to propose to your kind consideration the nomination of Doctor Palmer for that station. Doctor Palmer, as agent, has always been very efficient and acceptable to the great majority of the Potawatomies and their missionaries. I doubt not his reappointment to the agency would be a source of great joy to them and accepted as a great favor.

With sentiments of profound respect and esteem, etc.

St. Louis University, Dec. 6, 1870.

Honorable E. S. Parker, *Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.:*

Honorable Sir.— Pardon me the liberty I take in sending you some communications I have just received from my brethren in the Catholic missions west of the Rocky Mountains. Having been the founder of several of these missions, over thirty years ago, I take deep interest in their welfare.

In regard to the Pend d'Oreille and Flathead agency, the missionaries desire me to inform you that they are well pleased with the appointment of the actual agent, Mr. T. C. Jones, and express great hope that he may be continued in his office for which he has all the requisite qualities, and in a religious view he exercises great influence on the minds of the Indians.

The Yakima Indians in Washington Territory have had an established Catholic mission for a number of years, and many of the Indians are members of the Church and desire the re-establishment of their old mission, and to receive the consolation of their religion and the instructions of the former teachers, the priests. I am informed that the actual agent, Wilbur, forbids the Catholic missionary "to set his foot on the Yakima reservation."

The Spokan Indians have been visited by our missionaries for a great number of years and are nearly all practical members of religion. It is most desirable for the welfare of these Indians that an agent in full harmony and sympathy with their missionaries might be appointed.

With sentiments of the highest esteem and respect, etc.

St. Louis University, Feb. 11, 1871.

Reverend Dear Father D'Aste:

I received your kind favor of the 20th ultimo. I remember the circumstances you allude to in your letter, "of making a show in an Indian dress in one of my visits to Paris" — a providential mark, as you express it, "of your future destiny; the evangelizing the poor Indians." I am much obliged to your Reverence for the news you give me concerning the Flatheads and the good and dear Fathers at the mission. I am very sensible to the kind remembrance you sent me in their name and daily pray that the Lord may prosper your holy undertaking for the welfare of the Indians. Please remember me to all and beg their prayers in my favor.

I have been called to Washington by the Secretary of the Interior where a great council has been held on Indian affairs in general. I then learned that forty-three Indian stations were to be divided among different denominations in the various sections of the country inhabited by the Indians, of which only four are assigned to the Catholics, viz.: one in Dakota (the mission we intend to establish in the spring among the Sioux), one in New Mexico, another in Montana (Flathead) and a fourth in Idaho. *In the whole of this affair the Indians have not been consulted as to the religion they desired to belong to.* I have given all the information I could give concerning our missions in Montana and Idaho; but I had no statistics to present from any of the Fathers as to the number of Indians converted, the schools and the various Indian tribes visited and attended by our Fathers. I have frequently called for such accounts and I stand much in need of them to render myself useful to the missions. I hope the Fathers will forward them at their earliest opportunity. They ought to be written as presentable to the Government. Please inform Reverend Father Giorda on this important subject, that he may inform the Fathers at St. Mary's, at St. Ignatius, at the Sacred Heart at Colville, etc., naming all the tribes converted or under instruction and the localities they inhabit. Upon the information given the Government may and will modify its plan of christianizing and civilizing the Indians.

I am instructed to make the same request of the very Reverend Mr. Brouillet, Vicar-General at Walla Walla, and of the Archbishop and Bishop Blanchet in favor of their Indian missions, if they have any.

From what I understand in Washington, " it is the intention of Government to remove the Flathead Indians from the Bitter Root valley — *volens vel nolens.*" If *volens,* it would be a happy thing. I dare give no advice on the subject. Reverend Father Giorda must know what is best under existing circumstances. I think the Government is resolved. I have done what I could to obtain the approval of the name of Agent Jones by the Senators. McConley as agent of the Blackfeet did not pass the Senate. My endeavors to the contrary had no success, as we have no resident mission among the Blackfeet. The same in regard to the Crow Indians.

My health is not good. I thank your Reverence for your kind invitation to pay a visit to the Rocky Mountain missions. I would gladly perform the trip, if in my power to do it. I may be directed by my superiors to accompany the Fathers and to commence the new mission at Grand River among the Sioux. However, I do not give up the hope of seeing the Rocky Mountain missions once more. I feel a great interest in doing what I can for their continuance.

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Please give my best respects to Father Giorda and the whole community at St. Mary's Mission, Bitter Root valley. I have the honor to be, etc.

St. Louis University, March, 1871.

Colonel S. F. Tappan, 436 *K Street, Washington, D. C.:*

Dear Sir.— I received your kind favor of the 17th ultimo. Bodily indisposition has retarded my answer. You mention in your letter McKenney's history of the Indian tribes of America, published in splendid style by the firm of Messrs. Rice & Butler, who call on you for additional portraits and among these, you express a desire to add the portrait of Victor, chief of the Flatheads, whom you style "a truly representative man, a representative of the religious element." During his long career as the leader of his tribe, he gained the good will, the confidence of all, even the admiration of his enemies by the suavity and dignified simplicity of his manners and his bravery and courage when called into action. I shall ever remember with the deepest sentiments of consolation the day on which Victor received baptism, the joy and happiness he expressed when together with a great number of other adults of his tribe he was admitted into the "Fold of the Lord," of which he has ever been a bright example.

An extract from the "Explorations and Surveys," etc. (of Governor Stevens), from the Mississippi river to the Pacific ocean (vol. 1, p. 308) calls to mind the "religious element" of Victor and of his people. Captain Mullan says: "When the guide and myself had reached the Flathead camp, three or four men met us at the entrance, and invited us to enter the lodge of the chief, Victor. They very kindly took care of our horses, unsaddling and watering them. As soon as the camp had heard of the arrival of a white man among them, the principal men of the tribe congregated in the lodge of the chief. When they had all assembled by a signal from their chief they offered up a prayer. This astonished me; it was something for which I had not been prepared. Every one was upon his knees and in the most solemn and reverential manner offered up a prayer to God. For a moment I asked myself, was I among Indians? Was I among those termed by every one savages? I could scarcely realize it. To think that these men should be thus imbued and so deeply too with the principles of religion, was to me overwhelming."

(Page 311, Mullan continues) "I cannot say too much in favor of these noble men; they were pious, firm, upright and reliable men; in addition thereto they entertained a religious belief which they never violated. They partook not of a meal without asking a blessing of God; they never rose in the morning or retired at night without offering a prayer to God. These Flatheads have always been held in the highest estimation and this I can fully confirm from actual observation."

In the summer of last year (1870) the Montana newspapers announced as a public calamity the death of Victor, the Nestor of the Rocky Mountains, great chief of the Flatheads. The above quoted captain, on learning the death of his old friend, addressed to all the Flatheads the following tribute in commemoration of their illustrious and old chieftain. From Mullan's following tribute and the above quotations an appropriate little sketch may be compiled to accompany Victor's portrait.

"*To the Indians of the Flathead Nation in Montana Territory:*

"Your friend, Captain Mullan, has learned with great sadness and regret the loss you have sustained in the death of your great and good chief, Victor.

"As the long and oft-tried friend of the white men, Victor had no superior among the red men of America. Mild and gentle as a woman and innocent of wrongs as a child, he commanded his people for near a half century.

"Your friend, while residing among your people, knew Victor well. He has eaten and slept and smoked at his camp fires, traveled with him to the hunt; has seen him help the widow and orphan of his tribe, and go in person on missions of peace to the Blackfeet, to the Crows, to the Sioux and to the Bannocks, endeavoring to maintain with them friendly relations. Brave in battle and generous in peace, he has set an example worthy of imitation to all Indian tribes. To his many and constant acts of kindness do I chiefly attribute the fact, that while I resided in your mountains I never had any of mine injured or any of my horses stolen.

"Victor's record as your chief is on file in the archives of the Government at Washington, and I shall use my best endeavors to have the Indian Department erect a monument to his memory, to commemorate his worth and his acts, and at the same time to teach all Indians that their good deeds shall never die.

"In reading the death of Victor I feel that the white man has lost a friend and I could not do less than say as much to your people.

"In the selection of Victor's successor, may you choose a chief that possesses, if possible, all his virtues, and may the mantle of his widespread greatness fall on his shoulders.

"Victor to-day is resting from his labors in the home which the Great Spirit has prepared in eternity for all his children who do right. May it be our good fortune to meet him again among the happy spirits of the celestial abode.

"Father De Smet, Mullan and all your friends among the whites have many reasons for feeling exceedingly sad to hear of the death of the great and good chief, Victor."

This tribute to the memory of Victor, given by Captain Mullan, is highly deserving of the chief of the Flatheads, and I am happy to be able to subscribe to it fully and bear him testimony. I have been intimately acquainted with Victor for years during my missionary residence and visits to the Rocky Mountain missions. In their hunting expeditions I used to pass the beautiful summer and autumnal evenings seated on the grass and flowery meadows of their lovely mountain valley, surrounded by my dear neophytes. They took the liveliest interest in my narratives of holy writ — on the creation, on the deluge, the ark of Noah, the Maccabees, Samson, Joseph and his brethren, etc. I occasionally entertained them on American and European events and wars, on Washington and his great country, on the battles of Napoleon I, his struggles and his final overthrow at Waterloo; on the long list of sovereign pontiffs, successors of St. Peter, to whom Christ has promised "that the gates of hell shall never prevail against his Church," adding that the attempts to overthrow the Church and its supreme pastors had lasted for over 1,800 years and the Church had gloriously survived all her enemies. At this Victor hastily rose, full of animation, and said: "Should our Great Father, the Great chief of the Black-robes, be in danger,— you speak on paper (or write); send him a message in our name, and invite him to our mountains. We will raise his lodge in our midst; we will hunt for him and keep his lodge provided, and will guard him against the approach of his enemies." As this last trait belongs to Victor, I have taken the liberty of adding it to the little biography of our great Rocky Mountain chieftain. It is a proof of his filial and religious affection and the generosity of his heart.

In 1843 I found myself for the first time at Rome, and the very Reverend Father-General Roothaan had the kindness to present me to Gregory XVI. The Pope lent a paternal attention to my little narrative of the missions and my account of the good dispositions of the Indians of the Rocky Mountains. He smiled at Victor's proposition and invitation; but then he said, with a seriousness of tone which has always lingered in my mind, "Truly, the time is at hand when we shall be forced to quit Rome. Whither shall we go? — God alone knows — Give those good savages my apostolic benediction."

Please present my best respects to Mrs. Tappan. I shall anxiously expect a copy of her valuable poem and wish for it a far-spread and great success.

I have the honor to be, etc.

St. Louis University, October 25, 1872.

(Hickey.)

Dear Sir.— I take great interest and pleasure in sending you some extracts of letters from Reverend Father Giorda, S. J., Superior of the missions in the Territories of Montana and Idaho, known by the name of the Rocky Mountain [missions]. These letters were written in Italian in the years 1863, 1864, 1865 and were never published on this side of the Atlantic.

I consider amongst the happiest days of my life when in 1840 I was sent out by my superiors on a visit to the Rocky Mountain Indians to sound their dispositions and, if found favorable, to establish missions among them. They exceeded all my expectations and in the course of a few years the following missions and missionary stations were erected:

1st. St. Mary's Mission among the Flatheads in the Bitter Root valley.

2d. Sacred Heart Mission in the Cœur d'Alène country.

3d. Mission of St. Paul near Colville on the upper Columbia.

4th. St. Ignatius Mission among the Kalispels, or Pend d'Oreilles, near Flathead lake.

5th. St. Peter's Mission for the Blackfeet near the Missouri Falls.

6th. The Mission of St. Joseph among the Yakimas in Oregon Territory.

7th. The Mission of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary at Helena City.

Besides, the Spokans, the Kootenais and a great number of other tribes have each their stations where they are regularly visited by the Fathers of the various missionary establishments. The missionaries are thirty-three in number, of whom sixteen are priests and seventeen are lay brothers, mostly of the Society of Jesus from Turin (Italy), to whom the missions of the Rocky Mountains were transferred and where they have continued their apostolic labors with great fervor and zeal until this day.

The extracts I now send you will go to show some of the hardships the missionaries encounter in their visits and excursions among the Indians; but at the same time the spiritual consolations and fruits they reap repay them a hundredfold. It is truly an encouraging scene to behold the happy and good dispositions of the Indians and the zeal and fervor they manifest on hearing the holy word of God and the consoling truths of salvation; which, with the grace of God, they edifyingly embrace, when understood.

With regard to the Indians in general allow me to add a few words from my own experience. The farther I find them from any intercourse with the whites, the better were they disposed to listen to the word of God. As the Indians approach the frontiers of our so-called civilization and meet with the first intruders on their land, they soon become contaminated and fall victims to all its vices and sins. The use of liquor is the first step and it is poured into them until their nature is changed and altogether brutalized. They sin, but they are more sinned against. "This practice of the destruction of a people of whom Providence has given us the guardianship, originating in such cases, is unworthy of the civilization of the age in which we live, and revolting to every sentiment of humanity." (McClelland, Secretary of the Interior.)

Very respectfully, etc.

St. Louis University, Oct. 27, 1872.

Reverend P. P. GIORDA and GUIDI:

Reverend Dear Fathers.— I was truly happy in receiving your letter and am very thankful for all the news it contains. I am particularly grateful for your kind invitation and would gladly make the journey if my health permitted. I may decide this question early next spring. However, I must add that the doctor who attends me gives me but very little hope and calls me a bird for the cat. It has afforded me a great deal of consolation to have been able to assist good Father Guidi and his two companions, who are now preparing to enter the great vineyard of the Lord in Montana and Idaho. I wish them every success in the great work before them.

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Many thanks for the pious remembrances of the good Indians. I sympathize with the Flatheads in their sorrows and the injustices done them. Their separation from the whites and their baneful influence may, I hope, be in time a service to them. I trust the Fathers will not abandon these good people whom General Stevens considered the model tribe among all the American Indians. Remember me to them. I daily offer up my prayers to God for their perseverance in the faith, their happiness and welfare, as likewise of the Pend d'Oreilles, the Cœur d'Alènes, Kootenais, etc. I have seen all the calumnies against the Flatheads in the newspapers and I knew them to be a pack of lies. It is the rule the whites follow when their interests are at stake. The Indians are everywhere their victims. I have full confidence that their good Fathers will not abandon them.

PART IX.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS.

(Descriptive, Personal, etc.)

(Unless otherwise noted, the letters in this part have not before been published.)

CHAPTER I.

NOTES ON THE WESTERN COUNTRY.[1]

The Rocky Mountains and the Prairie Ocean — Scarcity of timber — A deposit of alabaster — Independence Rock — Chimney Rock — The Platte and some other rivers — A tornado on the plains — An ode.

Sweetwater River, July 14, 1841.

Very Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:

ALREADY two long months have elapsed since we began our journey; but we are at length in sight of those dear mountains that have so long been the object of our desires. They are called Rocky, because they are almost entirely formed of granite and silex, or flint stone. The length, position and elevation of this truly wonderful chain of mountains have induced geographers to give to it the appellation of "the back-bone of the western hemisphere." Traversing almost the whole of North America, from north to south, containing the sources of some of the largest streams of the world, this chain has for its branches, toward the west the spur of the Cordilleras, which divide the Empire of Mexico, and toward the east the less known but not less wonderful mountains of the Wind river, where are found the sources of the large streams that empty themselves into the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. The Black Hills and the table lands, called Prairie Hills, which separate the sources of the upper Missouri from those of the Mississippi, the Ozark and the Masserne ridges may all be considered as so many collateral chains of the Rocky Mountains.

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[1] From Father De Smet's narrative of his journey in 1841. *Letters and Sketches*, p. 76.

According to trigonometrical calculations and observations made by means of the barometer, Mr. Bonneville, in his memoirs, asserts that the summits of some of these mountains are 25,000 feet high.[2] This height would appear much exaggerated if we consulted only the testimony of the eyes, but it is well known that the mountains which are found in immense plains are not unlike ships seen on the ocean; they appear much less elevated than they are in reality. Whatever may be the height of these colossal mountains, it was at their base that we hoped to meet our dear neophytes. But a messenger we had sent to acquaint them with our arrival has just returned and informed us that the Indians who lay encamped there about a fortnight ago went in a southerly direction to hunt the buffalo. We know not whether those Indians were Flatheads or belong to another nation, and it is to obtain information on this subject that we are going to dispatch a second messenger. In the meantime I shall continue my journal. The numerous notes which, on account of our slow progress, we have been enabled to take on the spot will warrant that exactness of description which is the more desirable, as it is a quality frequently wanting in the accounts given of these distant regions. Not to exceed the bounds of a lengthy letter, I shall say but little concerning perspectives, flowers, birds, animals, Indians and adventures.

With the exception of the ridges which run parallel to each other on both sides of the Platte river, and which, after passing under the Black Hills, disappear at the base of the Rocky Mountains, the whole plain which we traversed for 1,500 miles after we had left Westport might be called the Prairie Ocean. In fact, nearly the whole of this territory is of an undulating form and the undulations resemble the billows of the sea when agitated by the storm. On the tops of some of these elevations we have seen shells and petrifactions, such as are found on several mountains in Europe. No doubt some impartial geologists may discover here, as they have done elsewhere, incontestible proofs of the deluge. A petrified fragment which I have in my possession, seems to contain a number of these shells.

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[2] Bonneville's "calculations" and "observations" were all practically worthless from a scientific point of view.

As elsewhere stated the highest of the northern mountains is less than 14,000 feet high.

In proportion as one removes from the banks of the Missouri or penetrates into the western regions, the forests lose much in height, density and depth, in consequence of the scarcity of water. Soon after only the rivers are lined with narrow skirts of wood, in which are seldom seen any lofty trees. In the neighborhood of creeks and rivulets we generally find willow bushes, and where there is no water it would be vain to look for anything but grass, and even this grass is only found in the fertile plains that lie between Westport and the Platte River.

This intimate connection between rivers and forests is so striking to the eye that our beasts of burden had not journeyed more than eight days through this desert when we saw them in some manner exult and quicken their pace at the sight of trees that appeared at a distance. This was chiefly observable when the day's journey had been rather long. This scarcity of wood in the western regions, so much at variance with what is seen in other parts of North America, proceeds from two principal causes: In the plains on this side [south of] the Platte River, from the custom which the Indians who live here have adopted, of firing their prairies toward the end of autumn, in order to have better pasture at the return of spring; but in the Far West, where the Indians do not follow this practice (because they fear to drive away the animals that are necessary for their subsistence, or to expose themselves to be discovered by the strolling parties of their enemies), it proceeds from the nature of the soil, which, being a mixture of sand and light earth, is everywhere so very barren that with the exception of the absinth that covers the plains, and the gloomy verdure that shades the mountains, vegetation is confined to the vicinity of rivers,— a circumstance which renders a journey through the Far West extremely long and tedious.

Over considerable areas, chiefly between the Kansas and Platte rivers, are found blocks of granite of different sizes and colors. The reddish or porphyry is the most common. In some of the stony parts of the Black Hills are also seen numberless quantities of small pebbles of all shades. I have seen some that were united into solid masses. If these were well polished they would present the appearance of fine mosaics. The columns of the House of Representatives in Washington, which are deemed very handsome, are made of similar concretions.

On June 29th, the feast of St. Peter, a remarkable occurrence took place. We discovered a curious quarry which, at first, we took for white marble, but we soon found it something more valuable. Astonished at the facility with which we could fashion this kind of stone into any shape, most of the travelers made calumets of it. I had several made myself with the intention of offering them as presents to the Indians, so that for the space of forty-eight hours our camp was filled with lapidaries. But the greater number of these calumets could not withstand the action of the fire and broke. It was alabaster.

The first rock which we saw, and which truly deserves the name, was the famous Independence Rock. It is of the same nature as the Rocky Mountains. At first I was led to believe that it had received this pompous name from its isolated situation and the solidity of its base; but I was afterward told that it was called so because the first travelers who thought of giving it a name arrived at it on the very day when the people of the United States celebrate the anniversary of their emancipation from Great Britain. We reached this spot on the day that immediately succeeds this celebration. We had in our company a young Englishman, [Romaine] as jealous of the honor of his nation as the Americans; hence we had a double reason not to cry "Hurrah for Independence." Still, on the following day, lest it might be said that we passed this lofty monument of the desert with indifference, we cut our names on the south side of the rock under initials (I. H. S.) which we would wish to see engraved everywhere, and along with a great number of others, some of which perhaps ought not to be found anywhere. On account of all these names, and of the dates that accompany them, as well as of the hieroglyphics of Indian warriors, I called this rock on my first journey "the Great Record of the Desert."

I shall add a few remarks about the buttes that are seen in the vicinity of the Platte River. The most remarkable of all, at least that which is best known to the generality of travelers, is the one to which they have given the name of "Chimney." It is called so on account of its extraordinary form; but instead of applying to it an appellation which is rather unworthy this wonder of nature, just because it bears some resemblance to the object after which it is named, it would have been more proper to call it "the inverted funnel," as there is no object which it resembles more. Its whole height, including the base, body and column, is scarce less than 400 or 500 feet; the column or chimney is only about 130 feet high, so that there is nothing striking in the loftiness of its dimensions. But what excites our astonishment is the manner in which this remnant of a mountain composed of sand and clay has been so shaped, and how it has for such a length of time preserved this form in spite of the winds that are so violent in these parts. It is true that this mound, and all those that are found near it, is composed of a successive number of horizontal and perpendicular strata, and has about the middle a zone or belt, consisting of a vein of petrified clay. If from these two facts it would be inferred that at a certain height the substance of which the horizontal and perpendicular strata are formed is susceptible of being hardened so as to approach the nature of stone, then we might perhaps account in some manner for the wonderful formation of this curious ornament. Yet the main difficulty would still remain, and we would at last be compelled to have recourse to the system of occult qualities. The existence of the chimney is therefore a problem, and if any scientific person should wish to solve it, I would advise him to repair to this monument without delay, as a cleft which is seen at the top, and which in all probability will soon extend to the base, threatens to leave nothing of it but the remembrance of its existence.

The Chimney is not the only remarkable mound to be met with in this vast solitude. There are many others of various forms. One is called "the [Court] House," another "the Castle," a third "the Fort," etc. And, in fact, if a traveler were not convinced that he is journeying through a desert where no other dwellings exist but the tents put up at night and removed in the morning, he would be induced to believe them so many ancient fortresses or Gothic castles, and with a little imagination, based upon some historical knowledge, he might think himself transported amid the ancient mansions of knight errantry. On one side are seen large ditches and high walls; on the other, avenues, gardens and orchards; farther on, parks, ponds and lofty trees. Sometimes the fancy presents a castle of the middle ages and even conjures up the lord of the manor; but instead of all these magnificent remains of antiquity we find only barren mounds on all sides, filled with cliffs formed by the falling of the waters and serving as dens to an infinite number of rattlesnakes and other venomous reptiles.

After the Missouri, which in the Far West is what the Mississippi is in the North, the finest rivers are the Kansas, the Platte, the Yellowstone and the Sweetwater. The first of these falls into the Missouri and receives the waters of a great number of tributary streams. Of these tributaries we counted as many as eighteen before we reached the Platte. Hence we may infer that the country abounds in springs, and that the soil is compact and covered with verdure. The reverse may be said of the neighborhood of the Platte, where springs and verdure are seldom seen. Even on the bluffs that run parallel to its banks the waters that fall from the clouds upon a sandy and porous soil run down into the valleys. But the prairies that receive the overflowing waters of the river are extremely fertile and appear beautiful in spring, being enameled with a great variety of flowers.

Here I cannot but speak again of the Platte, although I have described it in the account of my first journey. The sight of the river itself is still more pleasing; though in spite of all its beauties, it has, like the most remarkable of its bluffs, received a vulgar name. This proceeds from the custom which some travelers have of applying to objects the names of things with which they are well acquainted. They have called it *Platte* or Flat river, on account of its width and shallowness; the former often exending 6,000 feet, whilst its depth is but from three to five feet, and sometimes less. This want of proportion destroys its utility. Canoes cannot be used to ascend it, and if barges sometimes come down from Fort Laramie to the mouth, it is because they are so constructed that they may be converted into sledges and pushed on by the hands of men. The author of Astoria has properly defined it "the most magnificent and most useless of rivers." Putting its defects aside, nothing can be more pleasing than the perspective which it presents to the eye; though besides the prairie flowers and the ranunculus, its banks bear only the eglantine and the wild vine; for on account of the fires made in the autumn the lofty vegetation is entirely confined to the islands that stud its surface. These islands are so numerous that they have the appearance of a labyrinth of groves floating on the waters.

Their extraordinary position gives an air of youth and beauty to the whole scene. If to this be added the undulations of the river, the waving of the verdure, the alternations of light and shade, the succession of these islands varying in form and beauty, and the purity of the atmosphere, some idea may be formed of the pleasing sensations which the traveler experiences on beholding a scene that seems to have started into existence fresh from the hands of the Creator.

Fine weather is common in this temperate climate. However, it happens sometimes, though but seldom, that the clouds floating with great rapidity open currents of air so violent as suddenly to chill the atmosphere and produce the most destructive hail storms. I have seen some hailstones of the size of a turkey's egg.[8] It is dangerous to be abroad during these storms. A Cheyenne Indian was lately struck by a hailstone and remained senseless for an hour. Once as the storm was raging near us, we witnessed a sublime sight. A spiral abyss seemed to be suddenly formed in the air. The clouds followed each other into it with such velocity that they attracted all objects around them, whilst such clouds as were too large and too far distant to feel its influence turned in an opposite direction. The noise we heard in the air was like that of a tempest. On beholding the conflict we fancied that all the winds had been let loose from the four points of the compass. It is very probable that if it had approached much nearer, the whole caravan would have made an ascension into the clouds; but the Power that confines the sea to its boundaries and has said: "Hitherto shalt thou come," etc., watched over our preservation. The spiral column moved majestically toward the North, and alighted on the surface of the Platte. Then another scene was exhibited to our view. The waters, agitated by its powerful action, began to spin round with a frightful noise, all the river boiled, and, more quickly than a rainstorm falls from the clouds, it rose toward the whirl in the form of an immense cornucopia whose undulous movements were like the action of a serpent endeavoring to raise itself to the sky. The column appeared to measure a mile in height; and such was the violence of the winds which came down in a perpendicular direction that in the twinkling of an eye the trees were torn and uprooted and their boughs scattered in every direction. But what is violent does not last. After a few minutes the frightful visitation ceased. The column, not being able to sustain the weight at its base, was dissolved almost as quickly as it had been formed. Soon after the sun reappeared; all was calm and we pursued our journey.

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[8] This is one of the first and best descriptions of the cyclonic summer storms which have become so dreaded in the central prairies since that country has become filled with population.

In proportion as we proceeded toward the sources of this wonderful river, the shades of vegetation became more gloomy and the brows of the mountains more cragged. Everything seemed to wear the aspect, not of decay, but of age, or rather of venerable antiquity. Our joy was ecstatic as we sung the following ode composed for the occasion:

Non, ce n'est plus une ombre vaine,
Mes yeux ont vu, j'en suis certain,
Dans l'azur d'un brillant lointain,
Des Monts Rocheux la haute chaine, &c.

Oh no! — It is no shadow vain,
That greets my sight — yon lofty chain
That pierces the ethereal blue;
The Rocky Mounts appear in view.

I've seen the spotless, virgin snow,
Glist'ning like gems upon their brow —
And o'er yon giant peak now streams
The golden light of day's first beams.

How from their ice-clad summits, steep,
The living waters joyous leap!
And gently on thro' vallies gay,
Sweeter than honey wend their way.

It is because on yon proud height,
The standard floats of life and light:
It is, that there th' Omnipotent
Hath pitched his everlasting tent—
The God whose love no tongue can tell,
Among his children deigns to dwell.

All hail! majestic Rock—the home
Where many a wand'rer yet shall come;
Where God himself, from his own heart,
Shall health and peace and joy impart.

Sorrow adieu—farewell to fear,—
The sweet-voiced hymn of peace I hear;
Its tone hath touched the red-man's soul:
Lo! o'er his dark breast tear-drops roll.

O! soon the silent wilderness
Shall echo with his song of praise;
And infant lips, from morn till ev'n,
Shall chant thy love—great King of Heav'n.

Father and God! how far above
All human thought thy wondrous love!
How strange the path by which thy hand
Would lead the tribes of this bleak land,
From darkness, crime and misery,
To live and reign in bliss with thee!

CHAPTER II.

THE MISSOURI RIVER.[1]

The Three Forks — The cataracts — Tributary streams — Gate of the Mountains — Resources of the valley — Scenery — Purity of the air — Bad Lands — Fate of the Elkhorn Steeple — Headquarters of the wolves — Some beaver stories — Lake Eustis and the wonders of the Yellowstone — Geological curiosities — A disastrous gorge — Wanity — Some tribal traditions — Prairie fires.

AS I have been speaking of rivers I shall give you a short geographical description of the Missouri, which I am inclined to call *my* river, as I have so often ascended and descended it during the last four years, traveled along its banks and crossed almost all its tributaries from the mouth of the Yellowstone to the place where the mighty river mingles its turbid stream with that of the peaceful Mississippi. I have drunk the limpid waters of its sources and the muddy waters at its mouth, distant more than 3,000 miles from each other. The prodigious length of its course, the wildness and impetuosity of its current, have induced the Sioux to call it "the Furious." Whenever I crossed this magnificent river the sensations which I experienced bordered on the sublime, and my imagination transported me through the world of prairies which it fertilizes to the colossal mountains whence it issues.

It is in the heart of the Rocky Mountains that the Missouri takes its rise, together with many other magnificent streams; such as the Father of Waters, into whose bosom it flows after having fertilized its own borders to a vast extent; the Arkansas and the Red river, both, like itself, majestic tributaries; the Columbia, which becomes the reservoir of all the waters of the Oregon territory, and the Rio

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[1] Part of Letter IV, *Letters and Sketches*, p. 85.

Colorado which, after winding its course through a gloomy and rocky desert, invigorates the most beautiful part of California.

The Missouri, properly so called, is formed by three considerable forks that unite their waters at the entrance of one of the passes of the Rocky Mountains. The north [west] fork is called the Jefferson, the south [east], the Gallatin, and the one between them the Madison. Each one of these is subdivided into several small arms that flow from the mountains and almost mingle their sources with those of the upper forks of the Columbia on the western side. I have drunk of both, distant only about fifty yards from each other; for the same field of snow supplies both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

After the junction of the forks, the Missouri for a considerable distance becomes an impetuous and foaming torrent. Below this its bed is more spacious and its course more tranquil. Steep rocks of a black hue jut and rise above its current to a height of nearly 1,000 feet. The mountains along whose base it runs are shaded by pines, cedars, fir and turpentine trees. Some of these mountains present a solitary aspect and wear a look of unspeakable grandeur. The river, for the space of seventeen miles, is seen raging and foaming, rolling from cataract to cataract with a roaring noise that is repeated by echoes from all the neighboring cliffs. The first of these cataracts measures ninety-eight feet in height; the second, nineteen; the third, forty-seven, and the fourth, twenty-six.[2] Below the falls, the beautiful river of Marias,[3] flowing from the north [west] adds its peaceful waters to those of the rapid and impetuous stream. Still lower, but on the opposite side, the Dearborn[4] and the Fancy disembogue themselves through mouths respectively 150 yards in width.

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[2] The series of cataracts and rapids here referred to commence at the city of Great Falls and continue about twenty miles; but the larger falls, of which there are four, Rainbow, Black Eagle, the Great Falls, and another, are included within a distance of ten miles. The total fall is upward of 500 feet. The lower, or Great Fall, is about eighty-four feet high, and may be properly called the Niagara of the West. The magnificent water power afforded by these cataracts is being extensively used for industrial purposes.

After many other rivers of considerable width and extent, we come to the Yellowstone,[5] the largest but one of all the tributaries of the Missouri, resembling the latter in many respects. This river too has its source in the Rocky Mountains and is 850 yards wide at its mouth. Its bed is spacious and its current rapid; its length is about 1,600 [750] miles, and at its confluence with the Missouri it appears to be the larger of the two. For a considerable distance above the mouth its banks are well wooded and its bottom lands are extensive and very fertile. The grey and black bear, the bighorn, the antelope, the buffalo, the stag and the common deer frequent these regions, whilst coal and iron mines are in such abundance that for fifty years they might supply fuel and materials to a countless number of steam engines.

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[3] Maria's river (Lewis and Clark), named for a lady acquaintance of one of these officers. Modern usage drops the apostrophe and makes it simply Marias. The stream is a large one, and drains an extensive tract of country. Lewis and Clark were in doubt, when they came to it, whether it was not the main stream.

[4] Error. The Dearborn river joins the Missouri from the west above the Great Falls.

[5] The Yellowstone river is one of the most noted rivers on the continent. It is not only a great river, in itself worthy of high comparison, but it comes from a region which in recent times has acquired celebrity throughout the world as that singular place where nature seems to be still engaged in finishing the work of manufacturing a planet. The river comes mainly in its upper course from the Yellowstone National Park. It flows through the beautiful Yellowstone lake, over the Great Falls, and through the Grand cañon, and exhibits within a distance of fifty miles a combination of grandeur and beauty unparalleled upon any other river in the world.

From its source it flows north 150 miles to the great bend of the Yellowstone, where it turns abruptly to the east. It then flows nearly due east for about 100 miles, when it turns gradually to the north and finally flows northeast to its junction with the Missouri. It receives no tributaries worthy of mention from the north, but many important ones from the other side. Of these the principal one is the Big Horn river, which, in its upper course, bears the name of Wind river.

After the Missouri has received the Yellowstone river, its bottom lands become more extensive; yet as little or no wood is found on them, it may be long before attempts will be made to cultivate them. The White Earth river coming from the north, and the Goose river from the south, are not very considerable. The width of each at the mouth is 300 yards. The Little Missouri, though shallow, has a rapid current, and has its sources in the south, as also the following streams: Cane [Knife] river, near the village of the Mandans; Cannon Ball river; Winnipenhu [Grand], Sewarzena [Moreau] and Cheyenne river, which is navigable for 400 miles, a rapid and muddy stream, 400 yards wide at the mouth; Teton river and White river (so called on account of the color of its waters) which are unwholesome. The latter is navigable for 300 miles, has a rapid current, and measures about 300 yards at its mouth.[6] The lands which it waters in the upper country are barren, and abound in animal and vegetable petrifactions, whilst its banks have everywhere a fantastic appearance.

Next and on the same side we meet the Ponca and Running Water [Niobrara] river, the latter of which has a fine current. Medicine [Creek] and Jacques rivers [James river] enter the Missouri from the opposite side; the latter is also a rendezvous of the beaver hunters and runs nearly parallel with the Missouri. After the White Stone [?] and the Vermillion, we find the Big Sioux river, on which is found the fine red stone quarry explored by the Indians to make their calumets. The Floyd and the Rodger [Boyer], the Maringoin, the Nishnabotna and the Nadowa fall into the Missouri on the northern side.

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[6] All of these distances are vastly overstated. Navigation refers only to canoes and bullboats.

Its chief tributary, the Platte, rises like itself in the Rocky Mountains and extends its course nearly 2,000 [1,000] miles. Though it is a mile wide at the mouth yet it is shallow, as its name indicates, and is not navigable.[7] The two Nemahas flow from the south and the Little Platte from the north. The Kansas, on the south side, is about 1,000 miles long and is navigable to a great distance. Grand river from the north is a wide, deep and navigable stream. The two Charitons are found on the same side, while the Osage and Gasconade rivers enter from the south. The former is an important stream, navigable for 600 [300] miles, and has its sources near the waters of the Arkansas; whilst the latter, though navigable only for sixty-six miles, is equally important, on account of the fine large pine forests that supply St. Louis and the adjacent country with lumber.

I shall say nothing of the many other less remarkable tributaries of the Missouri, such as the Blue, the Mine, the Bonne Femme, the Manitou, the Muddy, the Loutre, the Cedar, the Buffalo, the St. Johns, the Wood river, the Charette, Bonhomme, Femme Osage, etc. The length of the Missouri, from its sources to the Yellowstone, is 880 [1,100 miles from Three Forks] miles, from the Yellowstone to its junction with the Mississippi, is about 2,200 [1,760]. I subjoin a list of the forks of its great tributaries which I have seen and crossed.[8]

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[7] It was navigated in canoes and bullboats, like the Cheyenne, White, and other streams which Father De Smet classes as navigable.

[8] Father De Smet's list of rivers is omitted here and the subjoined list given instead.

Following is a table of the more important streams of the great Missouri Basin, so often referred to by Father De Smet:

Mississippi-Missouri river, length, 4,221 miles.

Missouri proper, length from Red Rock lake, source of the Jefferson, 2,945 miles; from the Three Forks, 2,547 miles.

I left off my narrative on Sugar river, [the Sweetwater] otherwise called Eau Sucrée; I must interrupt it to listen to the good tidings that are brought from the mountains.

I remain, Rev. and Dear Father,
Your Dutiful Son in Christ,

TRIBUTARIES.

(Distances are above mouth of Missouri.)

Gasconade river, enters Missouri from south (right bank), 110 miles.

Osage river, a large and important stream, enters from the south (right), 142 miles.

Grand river (Missouri), from the north (left bank), 261 miles.

Kansas river is a large stream entering from the west (right) at the site of Kansas City, where the Missouri makes its great bend to the east, 390 miles. Formed by the junction of the Smoky Hill and Republican rivers. Has been navigated by steam to this point. Largest tributary, the Big Blue, from the north.

Little Platte, from the east (left), 411 miles.

Nadowa river, from the east (left), 499 miles.

Big Nemah, from the west (right), 529 miles.

Nishnabotna river, from the east (left), 588 miles.

Platte river, largest tributary of the Missouri, except the Yellowstone, enters from west (right), 635 miles. Formed by junction of North and South Forks in western Nebraska. Principal tributaries of North Fork are Laramie river from south (right) and Sweetwater from the north (left) bank. The principal tributaries of the Platte below the junction of the North and South Forks are the Loup Fork and the Elkhorn rivers.

Big Sioux, from the east (left), 810 miles.

Vermillion, from the east (left), 854 miles.

James, from the east (left), 888 miles.

Niobrara, from the west (right), 941 miles.

White, from the west (right), 1,055 miles.

Bad river (formerly called Teton or Little Missouri), from the west (right), 1,172 miles.

Cheyenne, from the west (right), 1,222 miles. A large stream formed by two forks which completely encircle the Black Hills of Dakota.

Little Cheyenne, from the east (left), 1,268 miles.

Moreau, from the west (right), 1,293 miles.

Grand, from the west (right), 1,316 miles.

Cannon Ball, from the west (right), 1,399 miles.

Extract from a Letter dated St. Louis, January 1, 1847.

I shall close this letter by giving you a geographical description of the great river which I have just descended, accompanied by only two men, for about 2,500 miles.

Heart, from the west (right), 1,446 miles.

Big Knife, from the south (right), 1,514 miles.

Little Missouri, from the south (right), 1,582 miles. Rises in the northern foothills of the Black Hills.

White Earth, from the north (left), 1,646 miles.

Yellowstone, largest tributary of the Missouri, from the south (left), 1,760 miles. (See earlier note.) Principal tributaries, all from the south: Powder, Tongue, Rosebud, Big Horn, Pryor, Clark. Of these the Big Horn is the largest, and bears the name Wind river in the upper third of its course. Its principal tributaries are the Shoshone (old Stinkingwater) and Grey Bull, from the west or left bank.

Poplar, from the north (left), 1,858 miles.

Milk, from the north (left), 1,937 miles.

Muscleshell, from the south (right), 2,076 miles.

Judith, from the south (right), 2,196 miles.

Marias, from the west (left), 2,263 miles. See earlier note.

Sun, from the west (left), 2,334 miles.

Three forks of the Missouri, 2,547 miles. The Gallatin is the easternmost and the Jefferson the westernmost, the Madison lying between the two. The Jefferson is the largest, its two principal tributaries being the Big Hole and Beaverhead rivers.

The following table of distances is from one of Father De Smet's unpublished letters.

"Here are the supposed correct distances from St. Louis to the mouth of the Yellowstone river. I give the principal names known in that country, but hitherto unheard of outside." [The second column of distances is from the surveys of the Missouri River Commission.]

TABLE OF DISTANCES.

	Miles.	Miles.
From St. Louis to Bellevue, above the the mouth of Nebraska or Platte river	800	646
Hence to old Council Bluffs	85	36
Hence to Little Sioux river	75	40
Hence to Black Bird's Hill and tomb	45	31
Hence to Big Sioux river	56	59
Hence to Fort Vermillion	60	49
Hence to Jaques or James river	50	27

The Missouri rises in the Rocky Mountains between the forty-third and forty-ninth degrees of north latitude.[9] The springs which give birth to several of its branches, are not a mile away from a large number of springs whose waters flow to the Columbia. I have stood upon snow banks that contribute innumerable torrents to both rivers. One runs west into the Pacific Ocean; and the other, which merits the title of the largest river of North America, by the abundance of its waters and the length of its course, but which was not explored until after the Mississippi and thence came to be considered its tributary, has its mouth twenty miles above St. Louis. The Missouri takes that name after the junction of three branches, the Jefferson, the Gallatin and the Madison. The place called the Gate of the Mountains is 441 [160] miles above the highest point of navigation on the Missouri and presents a magnificent and pic-

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	Miles.	Miles.
Hence to Niobrara or L'Eau qui Court river	80	54
Hence to the Grand Tower	40	....
Hence to White river	100	113
Hence to Medicine river	80	71
Hence to Fort Pierre	65	48
From Fort Pierre to Cheyenne river	60	48
Hence to Moreau river	96	71
Hence to Cannonball river	130	106
Hence to Heart river	50	47
Hence to Fort Clark (among the Aricaras and Mandans)	65	60
Hence to Fort Berthold or Grosventres	65	52
Hence to White Earth river	90	89
Hence to the mouth of the Yellowstone river, three miles below Fort Union	150	114
	2,322	1,760

The number of bends of the Missouri river, from Bellevue to the mouth of the Yellowstone river, is 256. In the same distance the number of its islands is 42.

[9] Red Rock lake, the ultimate source, is about in latitude 48° 30′. The junction of the Three Forks, where the name Missouri first applies, is about 46°.

turesque view. For a distance of six miles the rocks rise perpendicularly from the bed of the river to the height of 1,200 feet. Here and there in crevices are bunches of verdure, firs, cedars and lone pine trees, watered by an infinite number of springs, which channel the sides of the rock. Here the river is compressed within a bed 150 yards wide; and only one place, a few feet square, is visible where a man might stand between the cliff and the water. From the entry of the Rocky Mountains to the Great Falls is 110 miles; to the junction with the Mississippi it is 2,685 miles.

The Great Falls of the Missouri are not as sublime as those of the Niagara, but they may hold second place for grandeur among all the waterfalls of this vast continent. In a distance of sixteen and a half miles the river descends 357 feet by a succession of rapids and falls. The greatest fall has a perpendicular height of eighty-seven feet, the second is nineteen, the third forty-seven and the fourth twenty-six; a succession of rapids and cascades of from three to eighteen feet fill the distance from one to another. The upper course of the river to the mouth of the Yellowstone [Marias] lies toward the north.

The Yellowstone, which has a mouth 800 yards in width, and which at that point seems as large as the main river, is probably the greatest of the tributaries of the Missouri. It comes in from the southwest, 1,216 [about 750] miles from its source and 1,880 miles from its junction with the Mississippi. Steamboats come thus far up and could go higher in both branches.

The length of the Missouri river from its source to its mouth is therefore 3,096 miles; add 1,353 miles from its mouth to the Gulf of Mexico and you have a total of 4,449 miles. It is without doubt the longest river of the globe. From the gulf to the Great Falls there is no insurmountable obstacle to its navigation. Its principal tributaries are navigable for distances of 100 to 800 miles. The alluvial soil along this river and its tributaries is fertile, but narrow and subject to occasional overflows. Leaving these bottom lands you enter the immense high plains covered with verdure and inclosed here and there with thickets and forests. The upper region traversed by the Missouri is sterile and arid. The current of the river is rapid and turbid in the greater part of its course. It is a half-mile wide at its mouth; at several other places it is much wider. Although all the waters of this immense region and of so many great tributaries unite in the Missouri, it is notwithstanding so low at certain seasons of the year that steamboats can scarcely find passage. This lack of water is attributed to the dry, open country traversed by the river and to its great evaporation.

The resources which the Mississippi and Missouri may offer to commerce are incalculable and have not yet been sufficiently appreciated. For thousands of years these magnificent American rivers rolled their waters peacefully through the vast forests, fertile prairies and most picturesque mountains, reflecting the varied scenes of a capricious nature; they were then unknown save to the wandering savage of the West or to the animals that fed upon their banks. At last they drew the attention of civilized man and now they have begun to satisfy both their needs and their desires. All parts of this vast region, watered by the main stream and its tributaries, may be penetrated by steamboats, and but for a small district in the plains of the upper Missouri, there is not a single point more than 100 miles from a navigable branch. One boat may take its cargo at Lake Chautauqua in the State of New York, another in the interior of Virginia, a third can start from Rice lake, at the source of the Mississippi, and a fourth, laden with the furs of the Rocky Mountains, can descend the Missouri 2,800 miles, and all meet at the mouth of the Ohio, to go down together to the ocean.

Reader, you live in Europe, where the commerce of every seaport, where all interior branches of navigation have been carried to the last perfection; where superior intelligences consume themselves in vain for lack of a career in which they can develop themselves. But here, on these vast ramifications of navigable streams, an endless, limitless field for commercial speculation is opened.

The first steamboat arrived at St. Louis in 1819.[10] To-day the Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio and their tributaries are covered with steamboats and craft of all kinds, and populous cities have arisen on their banks. There are now in the centre of the American continent ports and commercial cities whereof each one by itself already does more business than many of the most celebrated ports of the Old World.

The valley of the Mississippi, one of the most astonishing marvels of nature, contains at least 1,300,000 square miles. It may some day possess a population almost as great as that of all Europe and supply all its needs abundantly. If its population becomes as dense as that of England, which already counts 207 souls to the square mile, the number of its inhabitants will amount to 179,400,000. But should it come to equal that of Belgium, as the fertility of the soil seems to warrant, its area will maintain a population of 200,000,000. What a subject for reflection to the philanthropist and the Christian!

I have the honor to be, etc.

Let us descend the Missouri together.[11] You shall admire with me the length of its course, its breadth, its marvels and its dangers. Upon that portion of its banks already occupied by civilization, some 2,653 miles, you shall admire the proud cities and flourishing villages, whose grandeur and importance grow day by day; the splendid chateaus, the dark ancient forests, the smiling manors, the model farms, the prairies specked with flowers, supporting innumerable herds and scattering abundance and happiness as far as its entrance into the Gulf of Mexico.[12]

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[10] They have since ascended the Missouri to the foot of the Great Falls, and the Yellowstone to a point a little above the mouth of the Big Horn.

[11] From the French of the third Belgian edition, vol. V. Dated "On board the *Yellowstone*, June 4, 1864, in the Cheyenne river country, 1,515 miles from the mouth of the Missouri."

Often have I rested by banks of perpetual snow, or beside little lakes and marshes, a fall or noisy cascade or some fair and abundant fountain, whose tutelary spirit (to adopt an Indian idea) seems to invite the solitary passer to rest in the cool by its swift crystal flow. I have spread my bearskin and my buffalo robe, which formed my bed, and passed many nights in profound slumber, after the fatigues of a long day's travel, now at the sources of the Athabasca, Saskatchewan or Missouri, now at those of the Columbia, which in some cases are not more than a mile asunder, and then depart to opposite points of the compass, the one to the east and the other to the west, toward the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. In that elevated region, the atmosphere is of remarkable purity; by night, in the blue-black firmament, the moon and stars shine with wonderful brilliancy. Here, as everywhere, one cannot but repeat the beautiful words of Thomas à Kempis: "Lord, all that we have in the order of nature, it is thou that hast given it; and thy benefactions remind us without ceasing of thy goodness and tenderness, and the immense liberality thou usest toward us, thou from whom cometh every good. Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies."

Excepting possibly the great Amazon river in South America, the Missouri is considered the longest stream on the globe. Its sources are in the Rocky Mountains, at 45° north latitude and longitude 110° 30′ west. Its three upper branches are the Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin. Thousands of miners are flocking thither at the present time, drawn by the attraction of the gold hidden in the bosom of that remote land. There are three cities with names there already, namely, Bannock, Virginia and Gallatin. All that country, for an immense distance east of the mountains, has recently been admitted into the Union under the name of Montana Territory.

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[12] Father De Smet, like every other person who knows the Missouri river intimately, considered it a river of great natural beauty, and came to form an ardent attachment for it and for its unique character among the rivers of the globe.

The sources of the Three Forks, as well as those of the Yellowstone, Dearborn and Sun rivers, are interlaced with the sources of several tributaries of the two great branches of the Columbia, Lewis' and Clark's Forks, known by their primitive names of Snake and Flathead rivers.

From the sources of the Three Forks to the Great Falls of the Missouri, about 500 miles, the waters incline northward; then, taking an east-north-east direction, they reach their northernmost extension at the mouth of White Earth river, at 48° 20′ north latitude. Thence the general course of the river is southeast, until its junction with the Mississippi, in latitude 38° 50′ north and longitude 90° 10′ west.

At about 411 miles from its first sources, the Missouri passes through the Gate of the Mountains, where it is compressed into a width of 150 yards. The floods rush tumultuously and swiftly along for a distance of six miles; the cliffs rise perpendicularly from the water's surface to a height of 1,200 feet, with a sort of jutting edge, where a man can hardly stand erect. This channel, scoured out by the impetuosity of the water, resembles the remarkable Dalles of the Columbia.

The Missouri proper commences at the confluence of the Three Forks, which come down from the mountains at almost equal distances and parallel with one another.

Between the Gate of the Mountains and the Great Falls (110 miles) the first tributaries of the Missouri are the Prickly Pear, Beaver, Camas, Dearborn and Sun rivers, with some other smaller streams or mountain torrents. The two last-named rivers are the most considerable.

The Great Falls of the Missouri are in the midst of a desolate and sterile region; they give it an aspect of grandeur, beauty and interest well worthy of remark. They commence nine miles below the mouth of Sun river, and reach for sixteen miles, in very rapid currents, falls and cascades, making a total descent of 380 feet. The last fall is the highest; the water drops a height of eighty-four feet. The river is 480 yards in width. One-half falls in a mass over a perpendicular rock, and the other half rolls its tumultuous water through a series of cataracts, falls and capricious cascades, into the basin at the foot. From an elevated point which commands the river from the north, there is a ravishing view. The water, the rocks slightly covered with a veil of foam, the lofty cliffs which frame it all, that succession of rapid currents, the deafening noise of the fall and the cataract, spreading into the distance, the column of vapor rising and presenting to the sun all the vivid colors of the rainbow, make a scene very beautiful and very wild at the same time. The Falls of the Missouri are among the most important in North America; they are 3,100 miles above its mouth.

Leaving the falls, we pass the Belt river and some minor water-courses, and arrive at Fort Benton, the highest post of the St. Louis Fur Company, 3,000 miles above the mouth of the river, a distance which has been reached by steamboats, under the conduct of the excellent and brave Captain Charles Chouteau. Thanks to the discovery of gold in the Territories of Idaho and Montana, Benton has become a great centre of commerce east of the Rocky Mountains.

Farther down, the Missouri receives the pretty Marias river, with its pure water, and the little rivers called Island Thirty-four, Sandy and Eagle. Here we are at the entrance of the "Bad Lands" of the Missouri, or rather let us say of its marvels.

At a distance of some fifty miles, we pass within sight of some scenes as fantastic as they are wonderful; nature seems to have produced them for her diversion, and to have exerted herself to vary them. There are evident indications that this passage through this sterile volcanic region has been formed by the might of water. To give an accurate idea of it would require an able pen and a most active imagination. I will try, however, to express something of it. Like all the other travelers, I was in continual transports of wonder and astonishment, from one end to the other, under the influence of this varied succession of picturesque scenes and views, which are at the same time curious and sublime, with the beautiful and grand often mingling with the fantastic. They pass before us as if a magnificent panorama were presenting them successively and rapidly to our eyes.

The bust of Washington appears at a distance — a large number of the passengers observe it simultaneously and call out the name with one voice. There is no mistake about it; we watch and wonder. As the boat proceeds and changes position, this same bust presents a fine lady in crinoline and then a shapeless mass. The great man *par excellence* of the last century here finds himself joined, in one and the same block and on the same pedestal, with one of the queerest types of present fashion.

Once engaged in this astonishing passage, one cannot prevent his imagination from seeing a great many things in it. On both banks of the river you think you see ruined cities; especially remarkable is a succession of blackened walls, several hundred feet in height. It seems incredible that such regular workmanship should not be artificial productions; but at the same time one is compelled to admit that an architect capable of executing them would surely rank as a great genius in his profession. One of these remarkable walls, called the "Hole in the Wall," has a round opening representing an ancient cathedral window. In another place appears a *porte cochère,* wide, lofty and of regular shape, cut from the living rock; it is like the entrance to an immense monumental cemetery, with its statues, busts, obelisks, columns, vases and urns, tables, entablatures, mortuary frescoes and monuments of every sort, which, in their structure and arrangement, appear like the antique and venerable remains of the remotest ages. We pass by the

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foot of the Citadel, an immense solitary rock. Another represents a steamboat. There follows a succession of ancient manors and convents, castles, cathedrals, bastions and forts, surmounted by towers and parapets and surrounded by sentinels motionless at their posts.

On either side cedars and pines, singly and in groups, spread their verdure and add to the beauty of the landscape. They clasp the rocks by the little crevices which afford them a few handfuls of earth and dust, and they crown the sides and tops of the hills. In the absence of any other wood, we are obliged to cut them down to feed the greedy furnaces of the boat; and soon the vandal axe will have destroyed one of the fairest ornaments of this marvel of the Missouri.

From time to time one is agreeably surprised to see, rising in the distance, the blue tips of the Little Rocky and Bear Paw Mountains; the latter are the higher. They are two isolated chains in the high plains of this region.

Lovers of the wonders of nature and those who travel with scientific objects in view will not neglect to come and visit a place so remarkable and which promises such rich discoveries from the point of view of geology. The Bad Lands of the Missouri will some day take their place among the great wonders of the American hemisphere.

In my various voyages, this remarkable spot has always charmed and interested me in the highest degree. One cannot view this succession of scenes without an ever-growing curiosity and pleasure always new. The hand of man has not touched as yet these astonishing works of nature; they are still intact, subject only to the atmospheric changes of this elevated region, under which, however, they doubtless change continually in aspect and in form.[13]

Passing out from the Bad Lands, the river Judith comes to pay its tribute to the Missouri. It is followed by three little nameless creeks, then by the two Calf rivers, Island

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[13] See footnote, p. 852.

Fifty-eight river, the Upper Rocky, the Cadotte, the Big Dry Fork, Milk river, the Porcupine, the Harvey, the Little Dry, the Wolf Point, the Poplar, the Elkhorn, the Upper Muddy, the Mackinaw and the Little Muddy. The principal ones are the Upper Muddy and Milk river.

The Judith is 2,768 and the Yellowstone 2,136 miles from the mouth of the Missouri. They are 632 miles apart. Singular formations of great isolated rocks are seen, on high hills, something in the style of those in the Bad Lands. The principal one is the monument of Napoleon the Great, called by this name, and no doubt saluted, by some *vieux grognard* of the *grande armée,* to recall to all travelers in this desert the memory of the *grand homme.*

The alluvial portions of the river present interesting views of another sort. They are a series of plains, stretching to the limit of vision, often interspersed with volcanic lands, producing nothing but cactus, Adam's needle (the proper name of which is *yucca*), with their pretty flowers, and sagebrush. Then it will be a series of pleasing prairies, which in spring are adorned with a rich carpet of verdure spangled with flowers. These plains and prairies are, for the most part, covered with forests of poplars, but these, greater or smaller, are lined, along the river, with vast willows. There is little or no underbrush in these forests, the trees stand at some distance from one another, and though irregular, seem as if planted by some ingenious forester. One notes especially wide and straight avenues, and smiling paths cutting them almost at right angles. Herds of buffalo, deer and antelope, and here and there sundry grizzly bears, the terror of the mountaineers, animate in their turn these silent forests. One would think himself in great parks and lovely parterres, such as one may see in the domain of some opulent European nobleman. Only the old donjon-keep seems lacking.

Seventeen miles below the Judith you come to what is called the Monumental Elkhorn Prairie. So far as I know, it is the only place in all this part of the country which has possessed a true monument, erected by the hands of the Indians. A tower had been constructed here, composed exclusively of elks' antlers; it was of remarkable height. Its base formed a great square. After every campaign against the elk and deer, so abundant in this region, the Indians would come here to deposit religiously the trophies of their hunt, that is, the skulls of the animals surmounted by their antlers. The most ancient of the Assiniboins (it is on their land) could not give me any account, either of the epoch nor of the circumstances which gave rise to the erection of this unique monument. The cupidity of a modern vandal has caused the demolition of this strange savage structure, which had resisted all the tempests, windstorms, stern winters and other vagaries of the atmosphere in this strange region. He took his capture to St. Louis and sold it, and there the antlers were transformed into handles for knives, forks and daggers. Wolf Point, thirty-one miles lower down, deserves a small notice. Here is the rendezvous *par excellence* of the wolves, those animals so cruel, but timid and cowardly at sight of man. They will attack together a calf or a cow, which they have managed to separate from the herd; they watch for buffalo to cross the river and try to climb steep and difficult places; the poor animals get mired in the mud, and often entire herds perish. The wolves throw themselves on them and devour them. On these occasions, these rivals of the jackals and hyenas express their joy in their own manner, in a kind of concert of terrifying howlings, as if a pandemonium had been convoked. I have several times found myself close to these carnivorous animals in cases of this kind. To prevent being kept awake all night, we had to fire a few shots from time to time, which reduced the frightened wolves to silence.

From the Yellowstone to Benton, there are rapid currents at intervals, of which there are ten that are difficult to ascend and very dangerous to go down. The whole power of the engines and all the strength of the capstan have to be applied, and the entire crew are put on the tow-rope to overcome the current. If in descending a point of rock or a loose boulder be touched, the shock is generally fatal to the boat. The hull is crushed in, despite the strongest framing. These rapids generally bear the name of some individual or other who has lost his life there, or undergone shipwreck.

In all this stretch of 632 miles, and as far up as the sources of the Missouri, the whole length of the bank displays the ravages of numerous beavers. These industrious animals, of whom so many wonderful things are related, seem to be more plentiful there now than ever; for the number of hunters has fallen off with the decadence of beaver hats, which have given way before head-coverings of silk. The presence of beavers is detected by the destruction which they make in the forests and among the willows along the bank. It is surprising to see the number of trees, large and small, which they have cut down. With their teeth these skillful animals cut branches with tender bark into four-foot lengths; these furnish their favorite food. and they transport them into their lairs. On the Missouri, they dig holes in the cut or vertical banks of the river, making them large enough to lodge a number of them. The interior resembles a cave, and can contain a whole family, that is, the old beaver and his old companion, and usually four or five little on[illegible] I have been assured that sometimes they contrive different apartments, larger or smaller. All the inside is lined with willow branches, picked clean and interwoven. The entrance to the cavity is obstructed carefully with a mass of twigs, mingled and heavily plastered with clay. They make a communication or passage-way which ends beneath the outer water, and also leave an opening overhead to admit air.

I have spoken of their ways and works in other letters. I will therefore not touch upon them here, but I should like to tell a story which I had from one of my traveling companions, a trustworthy man, an intrepid hunter, and who saw these things himself. Happening one day to be above a beaver lodge, he heard the young ones crying, very much like the wailing of babies. The old beaver it appeared did not like so much noise, and to restore silence in his young family he took them one at a time and thrust them again and again under the water until they stopped. The observer was amazed.

Another time, a large beaver was caught in a trap. In such circumstances, they do not hesitate to bite off the foot that is caught, to release themselves. Wishing to be sure of his prey, our hunter had so arranged that the beaver could easily pull up the stake and drag off the trap together with its chain. The floating wood would serve as a buoy. He soon saw the beaver struggling near the bank; he pulled his prey out of the water and took up a club to knock the creature on the head. The poor animal instinctively put up his paw to protect his head, uttering lamentations and cries like a human being. The hunter made a motion several times as if to strike him; each time, the beaver put up his paw to save himself and repeated his complaints. The man told me that if he could have got the animal out of the trap, he would have let him go; but he dreaded, and with reason, the beast's terrible teeth, which cut like a carpenter's chisel.

Beaver are still found all along the river, even in places quite near the new settlements of the whites; but in the end they disappear from such places. The beaver's instinct makes him seek the most retired spots, and it is on the least frequented forks of the rivers that their lodges are found in the greatest numbers. There they are more regularly built than on the banks of the great river. The streams are dammed with strong and high dikes, which make fine ponds for the animals. Instinct moreover warns them of spring droughts and of scarcity of rain and snow in the mountains; then they redouble their activity and triple their dikes, to make sure of having a sufficient quantity of water for summer. This is, to the Indians and people acquainted with the country, a certain sign that the river will be low in the season of high water, and they govern themselves accordingly.

To conclude, I must tell you that in spring, toward the period when the female is carrying her young, she takes sole possession of the lodge. The father, with his young progeny, amuses himself elsewhere and spends the pleasant season around the neighborhood; notwithstanding, he takes care to provide his companion with victuals in abundance. There is a belief commonly held among the hunters, that just as among men there exist indolent persons who arouse scorn rather than pity, so there are lazy individuals found among the beavers; they refuse to do any work, go and come, eat and live at the expense of the others; but when one of these loafers comes and tries to mingle with the rest, he is received with their teeth; his presence seems to inspire the others with horror, and he bears the marks of it in his slit ears and his long tail lacerated and torn by bites. Repulsed everywhere, miserable and wretched, he passes his sad days apart, in some heap of driftwood or abandoned lodge.

The Indians, as well as the hunters, regard the beaver as the animal who most nearly approaches man, as they say, "by his sense, his instinct, his manners and customs." The Absharokays or Crows treat them as brothers, because, as they claim, the beavers gave birth to their first father and mother.

The region of the upper Missouri as far as the Yellowstone, of which I have been telling you, contains more than one interesting reminder of another nature. It is the country ranged by the Assiniboins, the Crows, the Blackfeet, and at the present day by the Sioux, and whither the tribes from west of the mountains, the Flatheads, Pend d'Oreilles, Kootenais, Nez Percés, Bannocks and Snakes come down for the buffalo hunt; where all contend for the possession of those animals, and which has been the theatre of an infinity of battles, encounters and combats. It is the land to which

Tchatka was accustomed to lead his people, and whither so many other renowned chiefs have conducted their tribes, whether to war or to the chase. A multitude of tolerably high hills, and of plateaus and prairies bear the names of some brave or other who distinguished himself near them. It is here especially that the greatest and finest hunting, of buffalo, elk and deer, is found.

I have often taken part in these, either riding with them in the chase or simply as a peaceable onlooker. Sometimes, motionless at my post, seated on my horse or on the flowery sward of the plain or on some height, I would watch the vast and variegated scene and the admirable skill of the Indians. I would share in spirit in all their ardor and their movements, as if I had really been one of the actors. There is no more charming nor more interesting view. The desert, whose profound solitude is usually silent and monotonous, is now transformed into a vast arena, full of life and movement; the air resounds in all directions with the bellowings of the furious buffalo, flying with all their might to escape destruction. The ground trembles under the dull sound of their formidable footfalls. It is a chorus of cries of hunters animating their ardent coursers to attack the fat beast they have selected; it is sudden, confused and irregular gunshots; it is columns and clouds of dust raised by the buffalo and the horsemen. Taken as a whole, it is a spectacle of the highest interest to him who witnesses it, and it recurs afterward to the memory with always fresh pleasure.

I was once present at a great hunt in which upward of 600 buffalo were laid low by about 200 Flathead and Pend d'Oreille hunters. In the same spot I saw all the Indians in the camp prostrated in adoration, with eyes and hands raised toward heaven, offering their thanksgivings to the divine and paternal providence of the Lord, who had granted them, in his goodness, so abundant a chase.

In this kind of hunt, or carnage, the entire animal is used up, even to the bones; these are cracked and broken open for soup. The marrow of the bones is the finest part of the whole animal and the most agreeable to the taste. The meat is cut into long strips and dried in the sun. When the chase is over, one horse easily carries the spoils of an entire buffalo. The savages break camp, and go away full of joy. They follow and practice literally the axiom, "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

But I am wandering too far away from my subject, it appears; let us return to the river and its tributaries. We had reached the mouth of the Yellowstone, the most important river of the Upper Missouri. It has a width of 800 yards at its entry. Among its numerous tributaries are the Big Horn and Tongue and Powder rivers. Its course is nearly parallel with that of the Missouri. It issues from Lake Eustis,[14] and its principal sources are in the springs and snowbanks upon the icy summits of the Rocky Mountains and Black Hills, one of their numerous chains. I suppose the Yellowstone to be navigable for steamboats for about 1,000 miles above its mouth. Abundant gold mines have lately been discovered at its sources, and thousands of whites are flocking in to-day, who will have to measure their strength with that of the Crow and Snake Indians, hitherto peaceful possessors of those mountains.

The Yellowstone and its upper forks have also their wonders, or one might say their Bad Lands. A volcanic region is especially noteworthy, where underground noises are often to be heard at a great distance. Jets of steam, like the exhaust of steamboats, are seen issuing from the soil, and there are mounds and broken hills in the strangest of shapes, which appear to have been thrown up by volcanic forces. The Indians pass these places in profound silence and with superstitious dread. They regard them as "the abode of underground spirits, always at war with one another, and continually at the anvil forging their weapons." They never pass without leaving some offering on a conspicuous point of that mysterious region.

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[14] Yellowstone lake was long known by this name. It was given for William Eustis, secretary of war, after the existence of the lake was made known by John Colter.

In the same section I have observed, in the side of a steep cliff, a wide and high opening, supposed to be very deep. The unfortunate savage points it out to you as "the place of coming-out and going-in of underground spirits," and to render them propitious, at each visit he throws in one or more arrows with his hand. Whoever hits the mark is sure of the success of the expedition, whereas he who misses the hole altogether will usually turn around and go home, abandoning for the time being the project that he had in view, whether it were of war or the chase. At the foot of the rock a heap of arrows or offerings that went wrong may be seen. No Indian, however much he might be in need of them, would dare to touch one of these objects, much less to take them away; they are sacred.

Between the Yellowstone (2,136 miles) and the Big Cheyenne, 1,515 miles from the mouth of the Missouri, there are eighteen creeks, which reach far into the interior on both sides, north and southwest. It is 400 yards wide at its mouth, comes from the Black Hills and traverses a rolling region of beautiful plains and prairies. The great ammonite that I sent to Father Catoir, professor at St. Ignatius Institute, came from this region. In this distance of 621 miles the principal rivers are the Big Muddy and White Earth, coming from the north; the Little Missouri, the Heart, the Cannonball, Upper Grand river and the stream called Moreau, coming from the south.

Upon Heart river, on one of its lofty hills, overlooking the whole region, there is a rather remarkable geological curiosity. At the top of the hill there is a large and wide stone, flat and level as a table, called Record Rock. It bears distinct imprints of feet of men and children, tracks of bears, bisons, elk, deer and antelope, all mingled in confusion. The tradition of the Aricaras, that is, the "primitive people," speaks of a deluge that covered all the country; and this rock is the place where men and animals, forgetting all animosity and fear, met in the face of the common danger; there it was that all found safety at the time of the flood, separating afterward, when the waters subsided, each going his way and resuming his former habits or work, to increase and multiply and replenish the desolate earth.

Cannonball river is interesting by reason of its numerous stone "balls," of all sizes, which gave it its name. These balls abound on the high rocky hills near and above the mouth of the river, for a distance of several miles. This is another curiosity for the geologist to explain. There are tiny balls as big as marbles, and others gradually larger until you come to masses weighing 200 pounds.

All along the river are a great number of eminences bearing names which recall Indian memories. Such is the Horsehead Butte.

A rise, both sudden and unexpected, in the Yellowstone and other rivers coming from the south, once lifted the ice in the Missouri and broke it up into large, strong and compact cakes. This rise took place on a dark night in the winter. These ice-blocks made a formidable dike in a bend of the river just below a large Indian camp. The dike built itself up on either bank as far as the bluffs which terminate the low alluvial bottoms. This vast gorge, swollen more and more by the ice and the immense increase of water, rose to a height of forty feet, until at last the formidable dam across the Missouri yielded to the pressure of the water, which rushed through impetuously and irresistibly. A large number of Indians perished in the flood, with all their horses and other property. The whole affair took only a few hours. The furious waters of the night had carried the ice out of sight, and before sunrise the river had resumed its ordinary even flow. The valley where this frightful and deplorable catastrophe took place resounded for a long time with the weeping of the poor unhappy savages who had escaped the wreck; and long afterward it bore the marks of their mourning.

Some buttes resemble in shape animals or birds, and bear their names; among others, Eagle's Head and Calf Buttes.

The Wanity Butte brings to mind that renowned chief, who was always fortunate in the chase and in war. He had raised a young crow, his pet, or "familiar tutelary spirit," according to the Indian calendar. The bird flew with the chief on all his expeditions, and to it Wanity attributed all his success and good fortune. The crow went and came according to the chief's pleasure, and was often absent a day or two at a time. When he came back his master watched him closely, and interpreted to his companions the cries and motions of his faithful little favorite. "The bird had discovered buffalo, or he had seen enemies." When they broke camp the crow took flight, and the band followed the direction which he indicated. Such fables are common among the savages, and they tell them as actual facts.

Opposite Old Fort Clark, on the Missouri, appears in the distance White Bear Butte. It bears the name of an Aricara chief, who was accustomed to go thither, to fast and torture himself. He went there every year, at certain periods, or before setting out on the warpath or the chase. He would spend whole days there without taking the slightest nourishment. He would cut off a joint of his fingers, or passing leather thongs through wide incisions cut to the quick under his shoulder-blades or in his breast, he would attach one or two buffalo heads and drag them a mile or so to the summit of the hill. On one of these occasions he was surprised and slain by the enemy.

An entire tribe will sometimes give itself up to the practice of the most austere macerations. There are few men advanced in age who have not made the sacrifice of several joints of their fingers and covered all the fleshy parts of their bodies with scars. The two fingers needful to draw the bow and fire the gun are always spared.

These poor wretches are still plunged in the maddest and most superstitious errors of paganism. Still, at every opportunity, they implore the aid of the Black-robe, to come and instruct their children in the true way of salvation. I hope that this happiness will soon be granted them, and that they will become good children of God, worthy of the early days of Christianity. I shall be among them in a few days, and I propose to remain some time to attend to their instruction.

At 220 miles from the mouth of the Yellowstone, on a high hill near a large and beautiful plateau, are the three united tribes, the Aricaras of whom I have been telling you, the Grosventres or Hidatsa, " People of the Willows," and Mandans. There are about 3,000 of them, living all together in a single large permanent village. Their houses are covered with earth, and resemble mounds twenty-five to thirty feet in height. Light enters and smoke passes out through a round opening left in the top. Although these tribes speak different languages, and though each has its own lands, the common and continual danger from the formidable Sioux, who carry on a war of extermination against them, has compelled them to join their forces to assume the defensive and protect themselves mutually.

The tribe of the Grosventres and that of the Crows have the same origin. A trifle, a senseless dispute over the carcass of an old buffalo, separated the camp into two portions. The Crows won the land of the Yellowstone and the Black Hills.

The Mandans and Winnebagoes, to judge from the resemblance of their two languages, seem to come of the same stock. However, neither of them has any tradition on the subject.

The Aricaras and Pawnees speak the same dialect, and parted in consequence of a simple refusal by the chief of one of the tribes, insolently expressed to that of the other. The latter had asked for some laces to mend his shoes and clothing; upon receiving a refusal, he went away, and advanced with his people very far into the desert. The two branches of the nation have never met since.

The Assiniboins are direct descendants of the Sioux tribes. What separated them was this. The famous buffalo was in this case also the apple of discord. In a common chase, a great number of the animals were brought down. The old men, women and children were butchering them. Each family has its own mark and can recognize the arrows of its hunters. Two women, the wives of two chiefs, claimed the same animal and quarreled over the mark on the arrow, each one asserting that it was her husband's mark. As usual, from words they came to acts, and to hair, which they pulled out, and then to fists and teeth and woundings. One "fixed" the other in the most barbarous manner. In the meantime the two chiefs arrived together on the field of battle. At the sight of the disarranged and lacerated features of their dear spouses, each one took the side of his own. Here they too go, into the stupid quarrel. The conflict soon became general and wound up in a fight to the finish, which left dead and wounded. The Assiniboin band had the worst of it, and parted forever from the others. Since that day they never meet save as mortal enemies.

From Cheyenne river to Fort Randall, 320 miles, the physiognomy of the country, on both sides of the Missouri, is so monotonous as in the end to depress the observer and weary the sight. Wooded points are rare, and with the exception of some bottom lands, the land is generally dry and arid. Large herds of buffalo, antelope and deer are seen from time to time at a great distance, and seem then to animate the sad desert and lend it a fleeting interest. Take away the animals, and for days and weeks together there is nothing to be seen but an endless succession of plateaus, bluffs and hills, which all resemble one another and seem drawn up like a long file of brothers and sisters, representing the same types.

I have traversed these regions in all seasons of the year. I have seen the prairies in spring, covered with a rich and supple mantle of verdure, waving and bowing under every breeze; they were enameled with flowers, as varied in form as in color. But at every bend or twist of the river, you see the same prairie, the same bluffs and the same hills, following the same type and in the same positions, and in spite of their uniformity, they are beautiful yet. I have admired them after the burning summer sun had transformed the vivacious green into a greyish yellow and the supple plant had become hard, dry and crisp, waiting only for the match of a careless hunter or a spark from the lightning to become the prey of flames. These aspects are disagreeable to the sight. I have seen this country on fire by day. The sun seemed to intensify the flame, and thick clouds of smoke rose above hills, uplands and bottoms, until the light of day was obscured. By night the spectacle is very different. The column of smoke becomes a column of fire; you see fire in all its forms. Here, it is solitary brasiers and snaky flames winding from branch to branch; there, it is a moving wall, a long train of fire, which lengthens, advances and devours everything upon its line of passage. I have passed these places again after the fire had devastated them, leaving not the slightest trace of verdure. These plateaus, these prairies, these bluffs and hills then offered the image of a land of desolation, which it makes one sick to look at. Finally the snows of winter come and cover with a mournful shroud all this strange nature. This is its last and gloomiest transformation; it gives us an idea of the instability of all worldly things.

From the Cheyenne to the mouth of the Platte it is 800 miles, in which distance there are twenty-three tributaries. The principal ones are—White river on the south, 300 yards wide at its mouth; the Niobrara (*L'Eau qui Court*) on the south; James river (*Rivière à Jacques*) on the north, and the Big Sioux on the north, 110 yards wide at the mouth.

The Platte, on the south, is 600 yards wide at its mouth and enters the Missouri 716 (635) miles above the mouth of the latter stream. Its bed is composed of moving sand which extends far above the junction of the two forks. Its channel is wide but very shallow. It waters an immense region and serves as its sewer.[15]

The Platte has its several sources in the Black Hills, the Wind River Mountains and other ranges north and south. It flows through a great valley whose tributaries connect with those leading into Colorado, the valley of Great Salt Lake and to the Rocky Mountains. From its valley one may pass by connecting routes to Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon and the Territories of Washington, Idaho and Montana. The valley of the Platte has become the Golden Gate, or the great highway which leads to the gold mines of those several countries.

The White river flows out of the Black Hills and drains the Bad Lands of Dakota of which I have given a description in a former letter.

L'Eau qui Court, or the Niobrara, owes its name to its rapid current. It also rises in the Black Hills and finds its ultimate source in an elevated peak called Rawhide Butte, toward the plains of Fort Laramie. It flows through a sterile, sandy region called the Sand Hills.

James river, Dakota, and the Big Sioux rise in groups of lakes on the high prairies, in the region of Devils' Lake, latitude 48° north.[16]

The most remarkable butte along that portion of the Missouri now under consideration is Blackbird Hill, named for a great Omaha chief, and situated on the west bank of the river 177 [118] miles above the mouth of the Platte.[17]

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[15] This is perhaps the only instance in literature where the two opposite functions so often ascribed to streams are predicated in the same sentence. It is practically a paradox to state, as is constantly done in all descriptive writing, that streams *water* their valleys. Their function is exactly the reverse,— that of drainage. Only on their immediate shores is any watering effect apparent, except in low, flat lands, generally near the outlets, where they frequently convert extensive areas into swamps.

[16] This is true only of the James river. The Big Sioux rises much farther south, near the sources of Minnesota river and Red River of the North.

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From the Platte to the mouth of the Missouri the distance is 716 miles. In this distance there are thirty-two tributaries, the chief of which are: the Nishnabotna on the north; the two Nemahas on the south; the Nodowa on the north; the Kansas on the south, 235 yards wide at its mouth and navigable by steamboats several hundred miles; Grand river on the north, 190 yards wide; the Osage on the south, 400 yards wide and navigable for a great distance; and the Moreau and Gasconade flowing from nearly the same country. I shall add a last little stream, the Coldwater, a little above the mouth of the Missouri. It waters the clearing grounds of St. Stanislas near Florissant where stands the Jesuit Noviciate of Missouri.

The tributaries of the Missouri which have been given names number 123. The number of islands between the mouth and Fort Benton is 219.

From the mouth of the Missouri to the source of its three forks is 3,700 [2,945] miles. Add to this 1,253 [1,276] miles, the distance from the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico and you have a length of 4,953 [4,221] miles. From the mouth of the Mississippi to Fort Benton, 4,253 [3,561] miles, steam navigation is practicable.

The current of the Missouri is rapid and its water a muddy yellow. Throughout its whole course, in spring and autumn, the principal obstacles to navigation are its sandbars and snags against which the boats strike and are either wrecked or suffer great damage. Other difficulties are the rapids above the mouth of the Yellowstone, which are insurmountable in low water. There are neither falls nor rocks in this entire part of its course.

The magnificent prairies formed by the alluvial lands that border the river are generally of extraordinary fertility and comprise what is called the Missouri basin. In the matter of fertility, there should be excluded a large portion of the upper watershed of the river in the neighborhood of the mountains; the land is sterile and arid, subject to long droughts and frequent frosts which destroy the harvests. The total extent of the territory watered [drained] by the Missouri is [considerably more than] 500,000 square miles.

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[17] Sketch of Blackbird omitted because already given in greater detail in other parts of this work.

The task which I imposed upon myself is accomplished. I dare not flatter myself that I have succeeded well, or have done credit to my subject; but I have at least the assurance of having tried to give you an idea of our great American river and its attributes by the aid of my recollections and impressions. There would remain, indeed, much more to say, if one wished to enter into all the details; but that would exceed the limits of a letter already very long. I will say in closing that at the mouth of the Platte, one is now in the midst of modern civilization and progress. One never ceases to admire, along the banks of the river, the succession of beautiful towns and villages, forges and mills, and manufactories of all kinds. Everything is in a state of transformation. There are new manors by the side of ancient forests, vast fields and smiling prairies, with innumerable herds of domestic cattle. Such is the aspect of things even to the Gulf of Mexico.

If it were possible to have a trial between the Mississippi and the Missouri to determine which has the right to be called the great and long river (*le grand et long fleuve*), it seems to me that the Missouri would win. At the place where the two rivers unite, it is larger [smaller] than its rival. The Missouri is the longer; it exceeds in length [the Mississippi above the mouth of the Missouri] by more than 2,000 [1,669] miles; it is the Missouri which furnishes the greater [smaller] abundance of water; in short it is this river that gives the Mississippi its current, its color, its salubrious and beneficial waters and all its other characteristics. The name has remained with the Mississippi, because at the time of its discovery by Marquette the Missouri was, so to speak, unknown.[18]

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[18] Father De Smet here advances a very common argument that the name of the lower Mississippi should have been carried to the Missouri because it is the longer stream.

From this very general view there is excellent reason to dissent. It is not clearly a logical rule that the name of a stream should follow the longest tributary. The size and importance of a river may be more rationally gauged by the volume of flow than by the length of channel. From this point of view the Ohio has the strongest claim to the name and the Missouri the weakest, for the latter stream discharges less water than either of the others. But there are other reasons why neither the length of the stream nor the volume of flow should in this case control, and why the name as it actually applies is exactly right. The Mississippi river flows nearly south through its entire course; it is obviously the trunk stream and all others merely laterals. It divides the country into two great sections, the east and the west. On one side the streams come mainly from the Alleghenies, on the other side from the Rockies. The Mississippi is the great central water-course which gathers up the drainage from both sides and conveys it to the sea. Political divisions are based upon it. For almost its entire length it is a boundary between States. The phrases "trans-Mississippi" and "beyond the Mississippi," so well established in our national literature, would have no meaning if either of the great tributaries carried the name. In fact the naming of this stream is one of those striking instances where the common sense of the multitude is better than the wisdom of the wise, for no doubt if the matter had been left to some learned geographer or society of savants the name would have been placed on the Missouri river to the perpetual inconvenience of future generations.—*American Fur Trade of the Far West.*

CHAPTER III.

FAUNA AND FLORA.[1]

Father Point's nosegay — Flowers — Shrubs — Trees — Birds — Reptiles — Insects — Fishes — Quadrupeds.

St. Ignatius' River, Sept. 10, 1841.

Reverend and Dear Father Provincial:[1]

I INFORMED your Reverence that flowers are found in abundance near the rock called the Chimney. Whilst we were there Father Point culled one flower of every kind, and made a fine nosegay in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the day of the Feast. As we proceeded toward the Black Hills, the flowers diminished in number, but now and then we found some which we had not seen anywhere else. I have taken notice of many of them for the amusement of amateurs. Among such as are double, the most common and those that are chiefly characteristic by the soil on which they grow, are to be found on this side of the Platte river. The rose-colored Lupine flourishes in the plain contiguous to the Platte as far as the Chimney. Beyond it grows a medicinal plant, bearing a yellow flower with five petals, called the prairie épinette; and still farther on, where the soil is extremely barren, are seen three kinds of the prickly-pear; the flowers of these are beautiful, and known among botanists by the name of *Cactus americana.* They have already been naturalized in the flower gardens of Europe.

The colors of the handsomest roses are less pure and lively than the carnation of this beautiful flower. The exterior of the chalice is adorned with all the shades of red and green. The petals are evasated like those of the lily. It is better adapted than the rose to serve as an emblem of the vain pleasures of this nether world, for the thorns that surround it are more numerous, and it almost touches the ground. Among the simples, the most elegant is the bluebell of our gardens, which, however, far surpasses it by the beauty of its form and the nicety of its shades, varying from white to the deepest azure. Adam's needle, found only on the most barren elevation, is the finest of all pyramidals. About the middle of its stem, which is generally about three feet high, begins a pyramid of flowers, growing close to each other, highly shaded with red and diminishing in size as they approach the summit, which terminates in a point. Its foot is protected by a number of hard, oblong, ribbed and sharp leaves, which have given it the name of Adam's needle. The root is commonly of the thickness of a man's arm, its color white and its form resembles that of the carrot. The Indians eat it occasionally and the Mexicans use it to manufacture soap.

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[1] *Letters and Sketches,* p. 110. Addressed in French edition to M. Rollier, avocat à Opdorp, près de Termonde.

There are many other varieties of flowers, some of them very remarkable and rare even in America, which are still without a name even among travelers. To one of the principal, distinguished by having its bronzed leaves disposed in such a manner as to imitate the capital of a Corinthian column, we have given the name of Corinthian. Another, a kind of straw color, by the form of its stem and its division into twelve branches, brought to our minds the famous dream of the Patriarch Joseph, and we have called it the Josephine. A third, the handsomest of all the daisies (*Reines Marguerites*) that I have ever seen, having a yellow disk with black and red shades and seven or eight rays, any of which would form a fine flower, has been named by us the Dominical, not only because it appeared like the Lady and Mistress of all the flowers around, but also because we discovered it on Sunday.

Shrubs. The shrubs that bear fruit are few. The most common are the currant and gooseberry of various sizes and colors, the hawthorn, the raspberry, the wild cherry and the service-berry. Currants, white, red, black and yellow, grow everywhere along the mountains. The best are found on the plains, where they are exposed to be ripened by the sun. I have classed the wild cherry and the service-berry among shrubs, because they are generally of low growth and do not deserve the name of trees. The service-berry (*cornier*) grows on a real shrub, and is a delicious fruit, called by travelers the mountain pear, though it bears no resemblance to the pear, its size being that of a common cherry. The mountain cherry differs much from the European cherry. The fruit hangs in clusters around the branches, and is smaller than the wild cherry, whilst its taste and color and the form of the leaves are nearly the same as those of the latter. Cherries and service-berries constitute a great portion of the Indian's food whilst the season lasts, and they are dried by them to serve for food in the winter. I may perhaps mention other fruits, plants and roots, that grow spontaneously in different parts of the Far West, and are used as food by the Indians for want of better sustenance.

Flax is very common in the valleys between the mountains. What must appear singular is that the root of it is so fruitful that it will produce new stems for a number of years. We examined one of them, and found attached to it about thirty stems, which had sprung from it in former years. Hemp is also found, but in very small quantities.

TREES. There are but few species of trees in the regions which we lately passed. Scarcely any forests are found [except] on the banks of rivers, for which I have already assigned a reason. On the plains we find bushes, and now and then the willow, the alder, the wax tree, the cottonwood or white poplar, whose bark is used for horse feed in winter, and the aspen, whose leaves are always trembling. Some Canadians have conceived a very superstitious idea of this tree. They say that of its wood the cross was made on which our Savior was nailed, and that since the time of the crucifixion, its leaves have not ceased to tremble! The only lofty trees found on the mountains are the pine and the cedar, which is either white or red. The latter is chiefly used for furniture, as it is the most resistible wood of the West. There are several species of the pine: the Norwegian, the resinous, the white and the elastic, so-called because the Indians use it to make bows.

So great is the violence of the winds in the vicinity of the Black Hills that the cottonwood, which is almost the only tree that grows there, displays the most fantastic shapes. I have seen some whose branches had been so violently twisted that they became incorporated with the trunk, and after this, grew in such strange forms and directions that at a distance it was impossible to distinguish what part of the tree was immediately connected with the roots.

Birds. I shall say but little of the birds. They are various in form, color and size; from the pelican and the swan to the wren and the humming-bird. Muratori, speaking of the last, compares him to the nightingale and is astonished that such shrill and loud sounds should proceed from so small a body. The celebrated author must have been mistaken, unless the humming-bird of South America be different from that of the Rocky Mountains. The latter does not sing, but makes a humming noise with his wings as he flies from flower to flower.

Reptiles. With respect to reptiles, they have been frequently described and I mention them only to give thanks to God by whose Providence we have been delivered from all such as are venomous, chiefly from the rattlesnake. Neither men nor beasts belonging to our caravan have suffered from them, though they were so numerous in places that our waganers killed as many as twelve in one day with their whips.

Insects abound in these regions. The ant has often attracted the notice of naturalists. Some have seemed to doubt whether the wheat stored up by this little insect serves for winter provisions or for the construction of its dwelling. No wheat grows in this country. Yet the ant piles up small pebbles of the size and form of grains of wheat in hills a foot high and three or four in diameter, which inclines me to believe that they use both for the construction of their cells. In either case the paternal providence of God is manifest. They display as much foresight in providing dwellings that are out of the reach of humidity and inundations as in laying up food for future wants. It is probable, however, that here they find food of another kind, and this might easily be ascertained. Fleas are not known in the mountains, but there is another sort of vermin nearly allied to it, to which I have alluded in one of my former letters.

And what shall I say of mosquitoes? I have suffered so much from them, that I cannot leave them unnoticed. In the middle of the day they do not trouble the traveler, if he keep aloof from the shade and walk in the burning sun. But at nightfall they light on him, and hang on him till morning, like leeches sucking his blood. There is no defense against their darts, but to hide under a buffalo skin, or wrap one's self up in some stuff which they cannot pierce, and run the risk of being smothered.— When green or rotten wood can be procured, they may be driven away by smoke, but in such case the traveler himself is smoked, and in spite of all he can do his eyes are filled with tears. As soon as the smoke ceases, they return to the charge till other wood is provided and thrown on the fire, so that the traveler's sleep is frequently interrupted, which proves very annoying after the fatigue of a troublesome journey. Another species of insects, called *frappe d' abord* or buffalo gnats, are found by myriads in the desert, and are not less troublesome than the mosquito. They are so small that they are scarcely perceptible, and light on any part of the body that is uncovered, penetrating even into the eyes, ears and nostrils. To guard against them the traveler, even in the warmest weather, wears gloves, ties a handkerchief over his forehead, neck and ears, and smokes a short pipe or a cigar to drive them from his eyes and nostrils. The firefly is a harmless insect. When they are seen in great numbers, darting their phosphoric light through the darkness, it is a sure sign that rain is at hand. The light which they emit is very brilliant, and appears as if it proceeded from wandering meteors. It is a favorite amusement with the Indians to catch these insects, and after rubbing the phosphoric matter over their faces, to walk around the camp, for the purpose of frightening children and exciting mirth.

Fishes. As our hunters were scarcely ever disappointed in finding game, we have seldom had recourse to fishing, except on fast days; hence our acquaintance with the finny race is rather limited. On some occasions, when provisions were becoming scarce, the line had to supply the place of the gun. The fish which we generally caught were the mullet, two kinds of trout, and a species of carps. Once, while we lay encamped on the banks of Snake river, I caught more than 100 of these carps in the space of an hour. The anchovy, the sturgeon and the salmon abound in the rivers of the Oregon Territory. There are six species of salmon. They come up the rivers toward the end of April and after spawning, never return; but the young ones go down to the sea in September, and it is supposed that they re-enter the rivers the fourth year after they have left them.

Quadrupeds. The beaver seems to have chosen this country for his own. Every one knows how they work and what use they make of their teeth and tail. What we were told by the trappers is probably unknown to many. When they are about constructing a dam they examine all the trees on the bank and choose the one that is most bent over the water on the side where they want to erect their fort. If they find no tree of this kind they repair to another place, or patiently wait till a violent wind gives the requisite inclination to some of the trees.

Some of the Indian tribes believe that the beavers are a degraded race of human beings, whose vices and crimes have induced the Great Spirit to punish them by changing them into their present form; and they think, after the lapse of a number of years, their punishment will cease, and they will be restored to their original shape. They even believe that these animals use a kind of language to communicate their thoughts to each other, to consult, deliberate, pass sentence on delinquents, etc.

The trappers assured us that such beavers as are unwilling to work are unanimously proscribed and exiled from the republic, and that they are obliged to seek some abandoned hole, at a distance from the rest, where they spend the winter in a state of starvation. These are easily caught, but their skin is far inferior to that of the more industrious neighbors, whose foresight and perseverance have procured them abundant provisions and a shelter against the severity of the winter season. The flesh of the beaver is fat and savory. The feet are deemed the most dainty parts. The tail affords a substitute for butter. The skin is sold for nine or ten dollars' worth of provisions or merchandise, the value of which does not amount to a single silver dollar. A gill of whisky, which has not cost the trader more than three or four cents, is sometimes sold for three or four dollars, though the chief virtue which it possesses is to kill the body and soul of the buyer. We need not wonder then when we see wholesale dealers in this poisonous article realize large fortunes in a very short time, and that the retailers, of whom some received as much as $800 per annum, often present a most miserable appearance before the year expires. The Hudson Bay Company does not belong to this class of traders. By them the sale of all sorts of liquors is strictly forbidden.

The otter is an inhabitant of the mountain rivers. His color is dark brown or black. Like the beaver, he is incessantly pursued by the hunters, and the number of both these animals is yearly diminishing. Among other amphibious animals we find two species of the frog. One does not differ from the European, but the other offers scarcely any resemblance. It has a tail and horns and is only found on the most arid soil. By some of our travelers it was called the salamander.

Opossums are common here. They are generally found near marshes and ponds that abound in small crawfish, of which they are extremely fond. To catch them he places himself on the bank, and lets his long hairless tail hang down in the water. The crawfish are allured by the bait, and as soon as they put their claws to it, the opossum throws them up, seizes them sideways between his teeth, and carries them to some distance from the water, where he greedily but cautiously devours his prey.

The badger inhabits the whole extent of the desert; he is seldom seen, as he retires to his hole at the least approach of danger. Some naturalists refer this animal to the genuine [genus?] *Ursus*. Its size is that of the dormouse; its color silver grey; its paws are short, and its strength prodigious. A Canadian having seized one as he entered the hole, he required the assistance of another man to pull him out.

The prairie dog, in shape, color and agility, more resembles the squirrel than the animal from which it has taken its name. They live together in separate lodges, to the number of several thousands. The earth which they throw up to construct their lodges, forms a kind of slope which prevents the rain from entering the holes. At the approach of man, this little animal runs into his lodge, uttering a piercing cry, which puts the whole tribe on their guard. After some minutes, the boldest show a part of their heads, as if to spy the enemy, and this is the moment which the hunter chooses to kill them. The Indians informed us that they sometimes issue in a body, apparently to hold a council, and that wisdom presides over their deliberations. They admit to their dwellings the bird of Minerva, the striped squirrel and the rattlesnake, and it is impossible to determine what is the cause of this wonderful sympathy. It is said too that they live only on the dew and grass roots, a remark founded upon the position of their village, which is always found where the ground is waterless and barren.

The polecat, or *Mephitis Americana*, is a beautifully speckled animal. When pursued, it raises its tail and discharges a large quantity of fluid, which nature has intended for its defense. It repeats these discharges in proportion as the pursuer comes near it. So strong is the fetid odor of this liquid that neither man nor beast can bear it. It happened once near St. Louis that Reverend Father Van Quickenborne saw two of these cats. He took them for young cubs, and pleased with the discovery, he alighted from his horse, and wished to catch them. He approached them cautiously, and was just ready to put his large hat over one of them, when all at once a discharge was made that covered him all over. It was impossible to go near him for several days — all around him was infected. His clothes could no longer be used, and the poor man, though rather late, resolved never again to attempt to catch young bears!

The cabri (antelope) resembles the deer in form and size; the antlers are smaller and have but two branches; the color of the animal resembles that of the stag; the eyes are large and piercing; and its gait in the wilderness is a kind of elegant gallop. Sometimes the antelope stops short and rears his head to observe his pursuer; this is the most favorable moment to kill him. When startled or shot at and missed, he darts forward with incredible swiftness, but curiosity induces him to halt and look back. The hunter tries to amuse his curiosity, by holding up and waving some bright-colored object: the animal approaches, and curiosity becomes the cause of his death. The flesh is wholesome and easily digested, but it is used only where deer and buffalo meat are wanting. The antelope hunt is a favorite sport with the Indians. They choose a spot of ground from fifty to eighty feet square, and inclose it with posts and boughs, leaving a small opening or entrance, two or three feet wide. From this entrance they construct two wings or hedges, which they extend for several miles.—After this they form a large semicircle, and drive the antelopes before them till they enter between the hedges, where they press so hard upon them that they force them into the square inclosure, in which they kill them with clubs. I have been told that the number of antelopes thus driven into the inclosure, often amounts to more than 200.

The meat of the buffalo cow is the most wholesome and the most common in the West. It may be called the daily bread of the traveler, for he never loses his relish for it. It is more easily procured than any other, and it is good throughout. Though some prefer the tongue, others the hump, or some other favorite piece, all the parts are excellent food. To preserve the meat it is cut in slices, thin enough to be dried in the sun; sometimes a kind of hash is made of it, and this is mixed with the marrow taken from the largest bones. This kind of mixture is called bull or cheese, and is generally served up and eaten raw, but when boiled or baked it is of more easy digestion, and has a more savory taste to a civilized palate.

The form and size of the buffalo are sufficiently known. It is a gregarious animal, and is seldom seen alone. Several hundreds[2] herd together, the males on one side, the females on the other, except at a certain season of the year. In the month of June we saw an immense herd of them on the Platte. The chase of this animal is very interesting. The hunters are well mounted; at a given signal, they fall upon the herd, which is soon dispersed; each one chooses his own animal, for he who slays the first is looked upon as the king of the chase — his aim must be sure and mortal, for the animal, when wounded, becomes furious, turns upon his hunter and pursues him in his turn. We once witnessed a scene of this kind. A young American had the imprudence to swim over a river and pursue a wounded buffalo with no other weapon but his knife. The animal turned

[2] Fr. thousands.

back upon him, and had it not been for the young Englishman, whom I have already mentioned, his imprudence would have cost him his life. The greatest feat of a hunter is to drive the wounded animal to any place he thinks proper. We had a hunter named John Gray, reputed one of the best marksmen of the mountains; he had frequently given proofs of extraordinary courage and dexterity, especially when on one occasion he dared to attack five bears at once. Wishing to give us another sample of his valor, he drove an enormous buffalo he had wounded, into the midst of the caravan. The animal had stood about fifty shots, and been pierced by more than twenty balls; three times he had fallen, but fury increasing his strength, he had risen after each fall, and with his horns threatened all who dared to approach him. At last the hunter took a decisive aim, and the buffalo fell to rise no more.

"Approaching" is carried on without horses. An experienced hunter, though on foot, may attack a whole herd of buffaloes; but he must be skillful and cautious. He must approach them against the wind, for fear of starting the game, for so acute is the scent of the buffalo that he smells his enemy at a very considerable distance. Next, he must approach them as much as possible without being seen or suspected. If he cannot avoid being seen, he draws a skin over his head, or a kind of hood, surmounted by a pair of horns, and thus deceives the herd. When within gunshot, he must hide himself behind a bank or any other object. There he waits till he can take sure aim. The report of the gun and the noise made by the fall of the wounded buffalo, astound, but do not drive away the rest. In the meantime the hunter reloads his gun and shoots again, repeating the manœuvre till five or six, and sometime more buffaloes have fallen, before he finds it necessary to abandon his place of concealment.

The Indians say that the buffaloes live together as the bees, under the direction of a queen, and that when the queen is wounded, all the others surround and deplore her.

If this were the case, the hunter who had the good fortune to kill the queen, would have fine sport in dispatching the rest. After death, the animal is dressed, that is, he is stripped of his robe, quartered and divided; the best pieces are chosen and carried off by the hunter, who, when the chase has been successful, is sometimes satisfied with the tongue alone. The rest is left for the wolves. These voracious prowlers soon come to the banquet, except when the scene of slaughter is near the camp. In such cases they remain at bay till night, when all is still. Then they come to the charge, and set up such howling that they frighten the inexperienced traveler. But their yells and howlings, however frightful, have little or no effect upon those whose ears have become accustomed to such music. These sleep with as little concern as if there were not a wolf in the country.

Of wolves we have seen four varieties, the grey, the white, the black and the bluish. The grey seems to be the most common, as they are the most frequently seen.— The black wolves are large and ferocious animals. They sometimes mingle with a herd of buffaloes, and at first appear quite harmless, but when they find a young calf strayed from its dam, or an old cow on the brink of a precipice, they are sure to attack and kill the former, and to harass the latter till they succeed in pushing it down the precipice. The wolves are very numerous in these regions. The plains are full of holes, which are generally deep, and into which they retire when hunger does not compel them to prowl about, or when they are pursued by the huntsman. There is a small sized wolf [coyote], called the medicine wolf, regarded by the Indians as a sort of manitou. They watch its yelpings during the night, and the superstitious conjurers pretend to understand and interpret them. According to the loudness, frequency and other modifications of these yelpings, they interpret that either friends or foes approach the camp, etc., and if it happens that on some occasion they conjecture right, the prediction is never forgotten, and the conjurers take care to mention it on every emergency.

There are also four kinds of bears, distinguished by the colors white, black, brown and grey. The white and grey bears [grizzlies] are what the lion is in Asia, the kings of the mountains; they are scarcely inferior to the lion in strength and courage. I have sometimes joined in the chase of this animal, but I was in good company, safe from danger. Four Indian hunters ran around the bear and stunned him with their cries; they soon dispatched him. In less than a quarter of an hour after this another fell beneath their blows. This chase is perhaps the most dangerous of any; for the bear, when wounded, becomes furious, and unless he be disabled, as was the case in the two instances mentioned, he attacks and not unfrequently kills his pursuers. Messrs. Lewis and Clark, in their expedition to the sources of the Missouri, adduce a striking proof of the physical strength of this animal, which shows that he is a most formidable enemy. One evening, the men who were in the hindmost canoe discovered a bear, crouched in the prairie, at a distance of about 300 yards from the river. Six of them, all skillful hunters, left the canoe and advanced to attack him. Protected by a little eminence, they approached without being perceived, till they were but forty steps from the animal. Four of the men discharged their guns, and each one lodged a ball in his body — two of the balls had pierced the lungs. The bear, frantic with rage, started up and rushed upon his enemies, with wide extended jaws. As he approached, the two hunters who had kept their fire, inflicted two wounds on him; one of the balls broke his shoulder, which for a few moments retarded his progress, but before they could reload their guns, he was so close upon them that they had to run with the greatest speed to the river. Here he was on the point of seizing them; two of the men threw themselves into the canoe and the four others scattered and hid themselves among the willows, where they loaded and fired with the greatest expedition. They wounded him several times, which only served to increase his fury; at last he pursued two of them so closely, that they were compelled to provide for their safety by leaping into the river from a perpendicular bank nearly twenty feet high. The bear followed them, and was but a few feet from them, when one of the hunters who had come from his lurking place, sent a ball through his head and killed him. They dragged him to the shore, and there ascertained that not less than eight balls passed through his body.

All the mountain Indians confirm the statement that in winter the bear sucks his paw and lives on his own fat. They say furthermore that before going into winter quarters, namely into the hollow of a rock or of a tree or into some underground hole, he purges himself, then fills himself up with dry seeds, which he does not digest at all. Then he remains lying upon one side for some weeks with the heel of one paw all the time in his mouth, and turns over only four times in the course of the winter.

Tigers [mountain lions?] are very numerous in the regions whence I am writing; but it appears that the fear of man is upon them not less than upon the other animals. Only a few days ago an Indian hunter came back to camp with three fine skins, eight to nine feet in length from the tip of the tail to the nose. He had come upon their tracks, and though armed only with a bow and arrows and accompanied by two small dogs, he had boldly followed them until he found them in a tree, where he had succeeded in killing them with arrows. These animals have extraordinary strength in their tails, and make skillful use of them to choke to death deer, bighorn, elk and other animals which serve them for food.

I remain, etc.

CHAPTER IV.[1]

THE MORMONS.

Rapid settlement of the West — A forecast — Salt Lake Valley — What the Mormons have accomplished there — Proposed emigration to Sonora — Their rise, doctrine and present status.

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TRULY, the United States is a region where marvels of every sort fellow one another so swiftly that one can scarcely follow them or believe what he hears. Towns and villages appear as if by enchantment. In 1837[2] I traversed a desert of some hundred and fifty leagues in which there was neither a house nor a cabin to give shelter to the traveler; once in a great while I met an Indian out hunting. Will you believe it? to-day that desert contains upwards of fifty cities, towns and villages, and thousands of the finest farms that one could ask to see.

The first civilized man who set up his tent amongst the Indians on the spot where now stands St. Louis, has just recently died. He built the first house; he leaves a city which contains already 90,000 to 100,000 inhabitants, and which will have 200,000 before 1860. I have just been down and up the Mississippi and the Ohio for more than 400 leagues. I know plenty of people here who remember the time when the Indian was lord of those waters and the whites only navigated them in secret, or else in large numbers and well armed; to-day, on those two rivers and their tributaries, over 700 steamboats, like floating palaces, sail majestically in all their splendor, employing 25,000 sailors and carrying 140,000 tons of every kind of produce and merchandise. These boats are valued at $12,000,000, and expend $10,000,000 annually, while the value of the merchandise that they transport in the course of a year from city to city and from one State to another, may be estimated roundly at $250,000,000. Of the lands watered by these great rivers, not one acre in ten is cultivated. What will it be like when the nine that remain are subjected to culture? Then 7,000 steamboats will be required to carry the products and the merchandise. The time is not far distant when on the banks of the Mississippi and the Ohio, from St. Louis and Cincinnati to New Orleans, there will be seen but a single unbroken village, surrounded with fair gardens and lovely fields. At another time I will speak to you in detail of the immense resources of this country, which could with ease employ and nourish all the inhabitants of the British Isles, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and Spain.

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[1] Extract from a letter to his nephew Charles, March, 1851 (in French).

[2] This date is wrong. It was probably 1838.

But I forget myself; I started to tell you of a recent and genuinely American occurrence. It has to do with the new Territory of Utah. In 1846[3] I found myself involved with a single companion in some very difficult and dangerous mountain passes. The character of the region appeared to me at that time very singular; its situation is different from that of any other section of North America. The summits of these precipitous and rocky mountains are covered with perpetual snows; the valleys are very narrow, sterile and arid; the earth and rocks are covered with bitter and saline incrustations; no other vegetation is to be seen than sagebrush of large growth, sufficient in that region for firewood for the lone traveler in those parts. As soon as one is through these passages, always arid in summer and choked with snow through five months of the year, he comes into a lovely and very extensive valley, which is the only habitable part; it is called to-day the Great American Basin, and it lies some 5,000 feet above sea-level. This basin is 560 miles in diameter; it has its own system of lakes and rivers, and has no apparent communication with the ocean. It is possible that gulfs may exist in the Great Salt lake, through which its waters discharge themselves into the Pacific, or it may communicate with other lakes in the regions of Lower California. The Great Salt lake, which is about 300 miles in circumference, lies in the northern part of the Great basin. It is rather shallow in the portions thus far explored; but is supposed to be very deep in the central parts. The water of the lake is more salty than sea-water. Three gallons of it yield a gallon of salt of the greatest purity, whiteness and fineness. On the northeast of the lake is the termination of the valley of Bear river. This valley is thirty miles long by twenty-two wide, and communicates with another valley which is fifty miles by eight.[4] It is in this first valley, inclosed by picturesque mountains, which has taken the name of the Valley of the Mormons, that their capital stands, called by some Great Salt Lake City, and by others Mormonville. These two valleys contain the principal body of emigrants belonging to this sect (a species of socialism and communism), more than 30,000 in number. They are capable of supporting in time a population of over 1,000,000.

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[3] This is probably a slip for 1841, when the Father did have an experience, like that here related, in the country now occupied by the Mormons.— See p. 303.

In the fall of 1846, as I drew near to the frontiers of the State of Missouri, I found the advance guard of the Mormons, numbering about 10,000, camped in the territory of the Omahas, not far from the old Council Bluffs. They had just been driven out for the second time from a State of the Union (Illinois had received them after their war with the people of Missouri). They had resolved to winter on the threshold of the great desert, and then to move onward into it, to put distance between themselves and their persecutors, without even knowing at that time the goal of their long wanderings, nor the spot where they should once more build for themselves permanent dwellings. They asked me a thousand questions about the regions I had explored and the spot which I have just described to you pleased them greatly from the account I gave them of it. Was that what determined them? I would not dare to assert it. They are there. In the last three years Utah has changed its aspect, and from a desert has become a flourishing territory which will soon become one of the States of the Union. It is bounded by California, Oregon, New Mexico and the region called of old the Great Western Territory.

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[4] Cache Valley, one of the most beautiful of all the mountain valleys, and now occupied by a dense Mormon population with some thirteen flourishing villages which can all be seen at once from any vantage point in the surrounding hills.

In 1847, in the month of April, the first Mormon pioneers left the place of their winter quarters at Council Bluffs; on the 22d of July of the same year they entered this valley and halted at the place which forms to-day the centre of the city. In the afternoon of the same day they were at work with three plows and a harrow, and had begun the first ditch for the irrigation of the field. On the 24th they planted five acres in potatoes. On the 28th they laid out the plan of the future city. It is divided into ten-acre blocks with eight lots to each block and a vast garden and yard to each lot. The streets are eight rods in width and the sidewalks on each side twenty feet. There are to be shade-trees along the sidewalks. Each block is surrounded with a stream of limpid water, coming down in abundance from the mountains. Every house stands twenty feet from the street line, and no two houses are built opposite each other, so that a man in his own front door cannot look into that of his neighbor, but has a fine view of his garden. There are four great public places, which will be adorned with beautiful fountains and trees brought from the four quarters of the globe. The square of the temple will have a fine garden. Already their missionaries have made arrangements in the Eastern States, in England, France, Italy, Denmark, Germany and the islands of the sea, to make collections of the choicest seeds and fruits, or anything else that can serve for the embellishment of this garden. By the first plan the city contained 135 blocks; since then there have been added 65 blocks on the east and 60 on the west of the city. The University place is a mile square.

It is barely three years since the first house was built in this city and to-day there are several thousand comfortable houses, built of sun-dried bricks, and they have an abundance of all the necessaries of life. In the vicinity of the city there are a great number of springs of all temperatures, mineral, sulphurous and pure water. The fields have to be irrigated to render them productive. The city lies twenty-two miles southeast of the Great Salt lake. Southward from it, at a distance of fifty miles, are Utah lake and valley, where the Mormons have built the city of Provo on the bank of a river which bears the same name. The water of this lake is pure; it is eight miles by four and abounds in fish. A hundred miles south of this valley a colony of some 200 families have settled in a place called San Pete, where ruins have been found covered with hieroglyphics, and a mountain, strange to say, of rock salt. While I was at St. Mary's, among the Flatheads, in 1844-1845, I sent several times to this mountain for salt.

For five months of the year there is no communication with the north, east or west, by reason of the snow, which renders the passage of the mountains impracticable. The capital of the Mormons is 111° west of Greenwich.

Such is the change that has come over this desert in so short a time, and such the spot chosen by these new sectarians for a shelter against the tyranny and persecutions that other sectarians have brought upon them. In the midst of the desert they have added a new star to the grand and beautiful American constellation. The Mormon sect has not been in existence thirty years. Already they have 200,000 converts or adepts, all of whom propose to go out and join their Utah brethren. The locality is well chosen, and will be able to render immense services as a place for rest, refreshment and provisioning for the army of emigrants who pass year after year on their way to settle in California or Oregon; and when the great railroad is built, which is to join the Atlantic to the Pacific, this territory will be of great assistance, and will serve as a great support, or station by the way.

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University of St. Louis, December 12, 1857.

Very dear Francis:

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Things are going on very easily in America. It will take a long time to restore confidence among the people. A whole new banking system is projected with assured guarantees. Hitherto these kinds of establishments have, for the most part, been nothing but regular traps, arrangements for smart scoundrels to get hold of the people's money with impunity.

There is a good deal of talk just now about war with the Mormons. These polygamous fanatics have lately been committing infamous atrocities upon the poor peaceable emigrants. A war of extermination is being prepared for them. The Mormons could make it a long and hard one in their almost inaccessible mountains. I think that the Mormons will pass the winter in doing the Americans all the damage they can, and early in the spring take up their march and take possession of the province of Sonora in Mexico. They have a political system that is inadmissible in a republic, and a religious system still less admissible, which is the "abomination of abominations," invented in the present century. The place where they live, the Great Salt lake country, is most miserable. Wood, fresh water and grass are scarce. The region would never allow a heavy settlement. The climate is not wholesome. Sonora offers all kinds of advantages, and the Mormons, after they have done all the harm they can, will take refuge there.[5]

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University of St. Louis, Jan. 19, 1858.

Reverend and Dear Father:[6]

I propose to give you in this letter a short sketch of the fanatic sect of Mormons, against whom the Government of the United States has just sent troops, in order to subject them to the laws, or force them to leave the country. The facts which I will relate on the origin and history of this singular people are chiefly drawn from a recent work by John Hyde, who had been an elder or minister of the Mormon sect.

The founder of the Mormons was one Joseph Smith, born of an obscure family, December 23, 1805, at Sharon, Windsor county, Vermont. The whole life of this man, from youth up, was marked by fanaticism, fraud and vice. More than fifty persons of good reputation and in every way worthy of respect, who knew him at Palmyra, New York, where he had settled with his family, have testified under oath that Joseph Smith was regarded as a man of no moral character and given to vicious habits. In 1820 Smith embraced Methodism. In April of that year he pretended to have had a revelation from heaven, while praying in the woods. He said that God the Father and Jesus Christ his Son had appeared to him, and had declared to him that his sins were forgiven, that God had chosen him to restore his kingdom on earth and propagate anew the truth of the gospel which all christendom had lost. In 1823 Smith, forgetting his revelations and his pretended divine mission, plunged as deep as ever in blasphemy, fraud, drunkenness and other vices. Then, he said, an angel appeared to him and revealed the existence of a book written on gold plates and containing the history of the ancient inhabitants of America. This is the origin of the "Book of Mormon," or Golden Bible, the Koran of these Mahometans. The next day Smith visited the spot designated by the angel as the spot where the book was. This was on the slope of a hill between Palmyra and Manchester. There he pretended to find in fact golden plates in a stone box; but this time his efforts to raise them were vain. There was, he says, a great contest between the devil and the angels as to it; but although the devil was beaten, the angel did not give the book to Smith, who received it only four years after, on the 22d of September, 1827.

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[5] The general outcry against the Mormons at this time had its influence upon Father De Smet, as is evidenced by his change of view in the six years between the dates of this and the preceding letter. Perhaps his ready acceptance of the report that the Mormons contemplated an exodus to Mexico was a case of "the wish is father to the thought." That would, indeed, have been an effective solution of the Mormon question in the United States.

[6] To the editor of the *Précis Historiques*, Brussels.

The Book of Mormon, like the Koran, is a tissue of contradictory plagiarisms and absurd inventions. The whole is interlarded with passages from the Bible. It has been proved that the portion given as historical is merely a plagiary of a romance of Solomon Spalding whose manuscript had been stolen by Smith. Spalding had written, under the title of *The Discovered Manuscript,* a romance on the origin of the American Indians. He died before publishing it. After his death his widow removed to New York and Smith is known to have worked near her house. Some time after the publication of the Book of Mormon she discovered the loss of her husband's manuscript. Many of Spalding's relatives and friends detected *The Discovered Manuscript,* slightly altered, in Smith's book. Spalding had been in the habit of reading long passages from his novel; the singularity of the facts, names and style, which was biblical, had so struck them that they did not forget it. Now, the Book of Mormon had the same characteristics, the same strange names, the same incredible facts, the same style. John Spalding, the author's brother, thus expresses himself on the point: "My brother's book was entitled *The Discovered Manuscript*. It was an historical novel on the first inhabitants of America. Its object was to show that the American Indians were descended from the Jews, or the lost tribes. There was a detailed description of their voyage, by land and sea, from their departure from Jerusalem to their arrival in America, under the orders of Nephi and Lehi. I have recently read the Book of Mormon. To my great astonishment I have found almost the same historical matters, the same names, etc., such as they were in my brother's writings." Many other persons, who knew Solomon Spalding well, and who for the most part knew nothing of Joseph Smith, gave similar testimony under oath.

The Book of Mormon probably derives its name from one of the chapters of this novel. A descendant of Lehi obtained the plates of gold, brass, etc., on which the prophets had engraved the history of the voyages and wars of their race, and this descendant was called *Mormon*. He abridged this history, and gave it to his son Moroni. The latter, having added a sketch of the history of Jared, inclosed all in a box, which he buried on a hill, A. D. 400. Smith, declaring himself chosen to give this wonderful book to the world, pretended to have received the gift of understanding and translating it. He did not write this translation himself, but dictated it. During the dictation he was concealed behind a curtain made of a bed-quilt, for the plates were so sacred that he did not even permit his secretary to gaze on them. To give a still higher idea of his golden bible, he explained the title after his own fashion. According to him, the word *Mormon* comes from the Egyptian *mon*, signifying *good*, and the English word *more;* so that *Mormon* means *Better!* Now, the bible, says Smith, in its widest signification, means *good*, since our Lord says in the gospel, "I am the good shepherd." The ignorant and fanatical believe all those fables.

The Book of Mormon, although most known, is not the chief book of the sect. The *Book of Teachings and Covenants,* containing some of the revelations which Smith pretended to have received from heaven, is regarded by his disciples as a book of the law which God has given this generation. Smith also published other revelations, which are contained in a little book called *The Pearl of Great Price.* Much of the doctrine of Smith is a mere repetition of the works of various Protestant sects. He has imitated Mahomet in his infamous immorality by permitting polygamy. To all this his successor has added abominable doctrines on the nature and attributes of God.

Smith organized his new religion in 1830. He could then number only six disciples. The next year, having obtained new adherents, he sent elders, two by two, to preach the new doctrine. When the number of his disciples had sufficiently increased, he founded a colony in Missouri, but their conduct induced the people of that State — first those around Independence, where the Mormons had first settled, and then those of Liberty — to expel them from the State. In 1834 the Mormon sect adopted the pompous title of "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints," and thence the Mormons called themselves Latter-Day Saints, or simply Saints.

Smith and his adepts having acquired, in 1839, a large tract in Illinois, in a beautiful section on the banks of the Mississippi, built a flourishing city, which they called Nauvoo, erected a magnificent temple, now in ruins, and lived there till 1844, when they rendered themselves odious to the people of that State. They were attacked by an ungovernable mob, and the false prophet and his brother, Hyrum, were massacred in prison at Carthage.

In 1845 these persecutions continued and the Mormons, driven at last from Nauvoo, resolved in council to seek a solitary and permanent abode in some fertile valley at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. They carried out this project in 1847, penetrated into the desert some 1,200 miles, and founded a new city on the banks of the Great Salt lake, at the foot of a lofty chain of mountains forming a portion of the eastern limits of the Great basin. Brigham Young, Smith's successor as prophet and chief, was their leader in this long and painful march.

The valley of the Great basin is about 500 miles long from north to south, and 350 from east to west. It is formed by the Sierra Madre bounding it on the east, and by the Goose creek and Humboldt Mountains on the west. Utah Territory, thus occupied by the Mormons, contains in all 187,923 square miles. (The lake, which is now only seventy miles long and thirty-five wide, probably filled, at a remote epoch, the whole valley. On all sides, on the slopes of the mountains, at a uniform height, are traces which water alone could have made.) In 1841 I traversed much of this valley in my rambles in the Rocky Mountains. The country was then wooded and agreeable, watered by springs and streams, winding through the valley. Since the Mormon emigration the forests have disappeared on the slopes of the hills and mountains, and, as the snows are more exposed to the rays of the sun and melt quicker, the springs dry up, and the streams give scarcely water enough in the spring to irrigate the cultivated fields and supply the domestic animals.

Salt Lake City contains at present 15,000 inhabitants. They are mostly English, Scotch and Swedes. Hardly one-fourth of the Mormons are Americans by birth. They are scattered up and down in the villages and towns of all the plains and valleys of Utah, so called from an Indian tribe of that region. The Territory is bounded on the north by Oregon, on the west by California, on the east by the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska, and on the south by New Mexico. The total number of the inhabitants of the Territory is less than 50,000, although the Mormon leaders, for ends of their own, represent it as much higher. The number of Mormons in different countries is estimated at 300,000. They send their emissaries to all parts of the globe. These take good care not to present Mormonism in its true colors to those who are not as yet prepared to accept it such as it is. Many of the Mormons at Salt Lake, it is said, adopted the new sect only in hopes of finding there an earthly paradise, with unlimited abundance for every want. Once in Utah, it is no easy matter to escape the snares and despotic power of the leader.

Brigham Young, president of the Mormon church, and now rebellious Governor of Utah Territory, enjoys absolute authority over his people. This man is, like Joseph Smith, a native of Vermont, born at Whittingham, June 1, 1801. Having embraced Mormonism in 1832, he soon became Smith's intimate friend. Since he became chief of the Mormons, he has displayed boundless ambition and talents far superior to Smith's. He labors to establish Mormonism all over the American continent. As to the Territory which he governs, he wishes to make it an independent State in the confederation. He has often declared that he will permit no one else to be Governor of Utah. He defies the authority of the President and of all the Union. The judges and other officers appointed by the General Government for the civil administration of Utah have been expelled from the Territory, after seeing it useless to attempt to exercise their functions. Young has set up tribunals of his own, and in the United States courts which he tolerated before his rebellion, the juries gave verdicts according to his direction. The Government at last resolved to resort even to force to make him respect its authority. Accordingly, last fall (1857), a detachment of 2,500 men was sent to the Territory to maintain the new Governor and his suite.

On this Young prepared to resist. The troops have already entered Utah, but the severity of the winter arrests them about 150 miles from the Mormon capital. The Mormons are not idle. They have surprised a train of seventy-six wagons, pillaged and burned them, carrying off all the animals, horses, mules and oxen. This loss is estimated at a million of dollars. The troops, ill-lodged and ill-fed, will suffer terribly if the winter is severe, as it is usually in the elevated parts which they occupy. As soon as the spring opens large reinforcements will be sent. There is a great diversity of opinion here on the matter. Many think that the war will be long and bloody, and that the Mormons will resist to the death. A great manifestation on the part of the Government will, doubtless, be necessary; and I think that as the new forces approach the rebel territory, the Mormons will retire after setting fire to their towns, and march to occupy some new district — Sonora, perhaps, or some other thinly-settled tract in the vast Mexican territory. This fanatical sect will find repose only outside of all other civil jurisdiction. It will master and subject all, unless it is mastered and expelled in season.

One more word on the Mormons and I have done. A new organization has been given to the Mormon troops. In 1840 Smith organized the Nauvoo Legion, and compelled all his disciples from the age of sixteen to fifty to enter it. This little troop has continually increased, and preserves its old name. No effort is spared to render the soldiers perfect in military discipline and exercises. They have at their head officers who served under General Scott in the Mexican war. Young's whole army might, in case of necessity, be brought up to 8,000 men. This number would not be formidable, were they not all animated with a spirit of fanaticism which will make them fight, if it comes to that, with an obstinacy like that of the first Mahometans. Besides the community of religion and interest there exists among them another bond. A great number of them are bound to the president and Prophet Young by horrible oaths. There exists among this people a society called the Mormon Endowment, into which members are admitted amid ceremonies most capable of inspiring superstitious terror. The initiated take an oath of blind obedience, as understood by the secret societies of Europe. The penalty of death awaits him who violates his oath. If the Mormons wish war, as they so loudly proclaim, they will have a chance this year, but they cannot long resist the troops of the United States.

I have the honor to be, etc.

CHAPTER V.

INDIAN ANECDOTES.

Principle governing courtships — The minister and the vowing savage — Brotherhood — Lying — A Blackfoot episode — A cherry-tree feud — On the destination of Calvinist ministers.

THERE[1] was an old Indian chief, who was a great observer. He had spent several years among the whites, and he said that the Indians not only had quicker ways of getting a wife, but were at the same time more certain of getting a good one. "Because," said he, in his bad French, "white man spark, spark, long time — maybe whole year, maybe two years, before marry. All right! Maybe wife good — maybe heap bad; maybe scold. Suppose wife scold; get up in morning, scold, all day scold, scold till go to sleep. Maybe scold, maybe not scold — all same thing; white man have to keep her long as live. How Indian do? Indian, see girl plenty work — go up to her, show her two finger right hand, heap close — two finger all same one — Indian look at girl, see girl smile — all right! Girl say yes. Then make feast and live together. No danger wife scold — wife know what husband do when wife scold. Husband run off, hide! Indian woman like heap buffalo meat, deer meat — no husband, no buffalo, no deer. Wife heap try please husband — husband heap try please wife — all live happy together, all same fingers on hand."

Once a Protestant dominie was preaching to the Indians, and took for his text "Make vows to the Lord your God, and keep those vows." As soon as the preaching was over, an Indian who had been present accosted him, saying, "Dominie, me make vow to go home with you." No ready evasion occurring to him, the preacher answered, "All right, come along." When they reached home, the Indian said further, "Me make vow to eat supper with you." It was so done, to the not very great pleasure of the minister's wife. Supper over, the Indian went on "Me make vow to stay all night in your house." The Indian's vows might have gone much further, if the Dominie had not cut them short by saying, "You can make all the vows you please, but I make a vow in my turn that you shall get out of my house early to-morrow morning." The Indian judged from his host's tone that there was no use in his making any further vows, and left the house the next day without ceremony.

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[1] From a letter in French to his niece, Rosalie, July, 1855.

A white man one day met an Indian and honored him with the title of Brother. The redskin stopped, and inquired disdainfully how and since when they had been brothers? The white man answered, "Oh, through Adam, I suppose." The Indian thereupon expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Great Spirit that the relationship was no closer.

The Indians have a horror of lying. Here is a case in point. An Indian courier came to a village of his tribe, and immediately called together all the chiefs and braves, having need of a prompt reply to an important message. They assembled accordingly, but after the messenger had discharged his errand and was waiting for the response, none was given him, and he soon became aware that his hearers were departing one by one and that he would shortly be left alone in the council lodge. A stranger who had been present inquired of the head chief the reason of this strange proceeding. "It is," he replied, "because he lied to us once."

[a]The Blackfeet are generally accounted brave, though instances have been known of three or four whites defeating a large party of them. On one occasion, three trappers fell into an ambuscade of these Indians, and two of them were instantly shot from their horses, but the third was left untouched, and spurring his horse to the height of its speed, broke through the whole throng and was soon out of reach.

Four mounted Indians immediately started in pursuit, and gained rapidly upon him until they came within shooting distance, when the lone trapper turned upon them, and with his double-barreled rifle picked off two of their number, and again fled.

Confident of securing their intended victim, now that they supposed his fire-arms were uncharged, the remaining two hurried after him, and in a few minutes were within range of pistol-shot. The trapper then again halted, and the discharge of a pistol brought the third to the ground.

Drawing forth a second from his belt, the work of slaughter would have been complete, had not the terrified savage, in his turn, fled with the utmost precipitancy. The trapper pursued, but was far in the rear when the Blackfoot regained his comrades, and hurriedly exclaimed:

"Haste ye! flee! It was the Big Medicine we pursued, and at his word three of our warriors breathe not, and of four I only have escaped! His single medicine-iron twice spoke the death-word, and at the same time; then with his pipe-stem he bade a third one go to the Spirit Land; and, as he drew forth his butcher-knife to shoot me, I had fled beyond reach, that I might tell you how to escape! Haste ye, flee! It is the Big Medicine that comes from yon! Flee, lest he kill us all!"

Following his advice, the astonished savages immediately fled with the greatest consternation, fully persuaded it was their only mode of escaping from certain destruction at the hands of the Big Medicine!

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[a] From the published work of Rufus B. Sage, entitled *Rocky Mountain Life*.

Last summer a great Assiniboin brave or chief left his tribe and came down to attend the Great Indian Council that was held in the Platte valley, near Fort Laramie. When he returned to his own country they told him that several members of his family had eaten too many cherries and died, having been attacked by cholera. The bereaved chief at once loaded his gun with fine shot and went out against some cherry trees, full of fruit, that were near the place. Then he addressed them, as if the fruit and the trees had been alive, and accused them of being the murderers of his children and relations. "And now," he said, "it is the hour of my vengeance, I shall kill you also," and thereupon fired several times into the trees. "Now that you are dead," says he, picking up the fruit that had fallen, "I will finish you by eating you up." But unfortunately he ate too much — the cholera seized him and in a few hours he too was dead.

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[8] Now if you want something about Indians to fill a corner with, here is an anecdote, not altogether savage. I doubt in fact if your *Précis Historiques* contain many better. Among the converted Indians on the Canadian frontier there was once a certain Jean Baptiste, whose further appellations are unknown to me; doubtless he was the owner of other vowels and consonants, forming one of those terrifying names, well called by the Americans "jaw-breakers."

Jean Baptiste it appears had done a little thieving in his time, and when he was converted the Black-robe enjoined upon him to restore two dollars to the Calvinist minister of the neighborhood. Jean Baptiste accordingly presented

[8] From a letter to Father Terwecoren, December 6, 1854.

himself before the minister, and the following dialogue ensued:

"Well, what do you want?" said the preacher to the native.

"Me, one time, rob you. Black-robe tell me, Jean Baptiste, you give that money back."

"What money is that?" inquired the reverend.

"Two dollar. Me, bad Indian, rob you; now, me good Indian, got water on forehead — me, heap child Great Spirit — here your money."

"All right — don't steal any more — good bye, Jean Baptiste."

"Ah — good bye no good; me want something else."

"What do you want?"

"Me want receipt."

"A receipt! What do you want a receipt for? Did the Black-robe tell you to ask for one?" said the surprised minister.

"Black-robe say nothing. Jean Baptiste (pointing to himself) want receipt."

"But why do you want a receipt? You stole the money, and you have given it back; that is all there is about it."

"That not all about it; listen. You old — me young; you die first — after while, me die. Understand?"

"No, I don't. What is it you mean?"

"Listen — me mean heap. Me go heaven after while, go knock on gate. Great Chief Saint Peter come open — say 'Hello, Jean Baptiste, what you want?' 'Me want come in Great Spirit's lodge.' 'How about your sins, Jean Baptiste?' 'Black-robe forgive sins all right.' 'How about that two dollar you stole from minister? You give him back? You show me your receipt!' Now then, poor Jean Baptiste, poor old Indian, got no receipt; have to run all over hell to find you!"

CHAPTER VI.

OBSERVATIONS UPON AMERICA.[1]

On gold in California — Bigness of the Republic — Inland navigation — Thrift and loftier motives — Chances not good for young foreigners of the better class — Nothing stops the Americans — Missouri in wartime — Brigandage and terror — The Mason and Slidell affair — Scenes at the firing on Sumter — Essay on the causes of the war — Both sides of the quarrel — The North and the South on slavery — Situation at the close of hostilities — The Missouri Test Oath — Persecution of Catholics — Grant's election.

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IN the last two months thousands of emigrants have passed through St. Louis, going to the California mines; every day some of them come to see me to ask counsel and advice. I have succeeded in curing some of them of the gold fever. Imagine thousands of adventurers of all countries, deserters, sailors, robbers, murderers, the scum of the States, of Mexico, Peru, Chile, the Sandwich Islands (with some honest men among them, no doubt), all living lawless and unbridled lives, and that is the condition in California at this time. The news of the abundance of gold seems to have shaken the United States to the foundation. The fever seems to be slackening a little. Twenty million dollars in values and specie has been sent to California.

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P. S.— In 1840 I climbed a lofty mountain a few days' travel from the Sacramento. The bed of a stream that came down from it seemed to me to be of gold sand. It was so abundant that I could not believe the thing was real, and I passed on without examining it. To-day I have little doubt that it was really the precious metal.[a]

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[1] Extract from a letter in French to his brother, Charles, April 26, 1849.

St. Louis University, Nov. 2, 1849.

DEAR CHARLES:

I received your kind letter of the 18th of August last. All you tell me and all your good father mentioned of you to me in his own letter has been most pleasing and welcome to me. I now begin a long epistle, which will be followed by several others, according to the leisure left me, on the actual position and progress of this country. I will endeavor in the series of letters I purpose to send you to give a succinct idea of what has happened and of what is taking place daily in this great country. Henceforth I will write to you in English to encourage you not to neglect that beautiful and at present most important language. You will please to translate whatever I write to you to your good parents — this certainly will be a most pleasing and agreeable *passetemps* in the long winter evenings in which we are now entering.

I have sent to you many a long letter from the great American desert, speaking of its wild inhabitants, of its animals, its flowers and trees, its rivers and lakes, its wastes, its mountains and plains. I have said little of its civilized portion. I now enter upon a lofty and vast subject, a subject which I hope you shall find full of interest, on which I will give you my thoughts, my feelings, what I have heard and read and know to be true. I will generalize in this, my first letter; I will enter into particulars in my next.

What nation on earth presents such a spectacle as the United States of North America, of a confederated Government, so complicated, over such a vast extent of territory, with so many varied interests, and yet moving so harmoniously? I went within the walls of the Capitol at Washington, and there, under the star-spangled banners that wave amid its domes, I found the representatives of eight Territories and of thirty States or nations — nations, in many senses, they may be called — that have within them all the germ and sinew to raise a greater people than many of the proud, now tottering, principalities of Europe; all speaking or learning one and the same language, all acting with one heart and all burning with the same enthusiasm — the love and glory of the Great Republic — even while parties do exist and bitter domestic quarrels now and then arise.

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[a] In 1840 Father De Smet passed very near, if not exactly over, the site of the famous Alder Gulch, Montana, the richest of all gold placers. It was more than "a few days' travel" from the Sacramento, however.

I take my map and I mark from whence the representatives come. What a breadth of latitude and longitude, and that too in the fairest portion of North America! What a variety of climate, and then, what a variety of production! What a stretch of sea coast on two oceans, with harbors enough for all the commerce of the world! What an immense national domain, unsurveyed, of extinguished and unextinguished Indian tribes, within the States and Territories and without, estimated in the aggregate to be worth the immense sum of $1,500,590.70, [?] of which lands 760,000,000 acres are without the bounds of the States and Territories and are yet to make new States and to be admitted into the Union! The revenue now, from the sales of public lands, is over $6,000,000. The national debt may be considered more than extinguished; and yet within seventy-five years, starting with a population of about 3,000,000, they have fought the war of independence; again struggled, not ingloriously, with the greatest naval power in the world, with fresh laurels won on sea and land — and now the Union has a population of over 23,000,000 souls.

One cannot feel the grandeur of this Republic unless he surveys it in detail. For example, two senators may soon be expected on their way to Washington, one from California, the other from Oregon. They must be constantly moving for months before they arrive at their journey's end. I never shall forget the rapture of a traveler who left the green parks of New Orleans early in March — that land of the orange and the olive, then teeming with verdure, freshness and life, and, as it were, mocking him with the midsummer of his own northern home. He journeyed leisurely toward the region of ice and snow, to watch the budding of the young flowers and to catch the breeze of the spring. He crossed the lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne; he ascended the big Tombigbee in a comfortable steamboat. From Tuscaloosa he shot athwart the wilds of Alabama, over Indian grounds that bloody battles have rendered memorable. He traversed Georgia, the Carolinas, ranged along the base of the mountains of Virginia; and for three months and more he enjoyed one perpetual, one unvarying, ever coming spring — that most delicious season of the year — until, by the middle of June, he found himself in the fogs of the Passamaquoddy where tardy summer was even then hesitating whether it was time to come. And yet he had never been off the soil of his own country! The flag that he saw on the summit of the fortress on the lakes near New Orleans was like that which floated from the staff on the hills of old Fort Sullivan, in the eastern-most extremity of Maine; and the morning gun that startled his slumbers among the rocky battlements that defy the wild tides of the Bay of Fundy, was not answered till many minutes after on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico and hours after on the shores of the Bay of San Francisco in California. The swamps, the embankments, the cane-brakes of the Father of Waters (the Mississippi), on whose muddy banks the croaking alligator displayed his ponderous jaws; the cotton fields, the rice fields of the low southern country and the vast fields of wheat and corn in the regions of the mountains, were far, far behind him, and he was now in a h[illegible]erborean land, where nature wore a rough and surly aspect, and a cold soil and a cold clime drove man to launch his bark upon the ocean, to dare wind and wave, and to seek from the deep the fisheries, and from freights the treasures his own home will not give him.

Indeed such a journey as this, in one's own country, to an inquisitive mind, is worth all "the tours of Europe." He who wishes to feel the full importance of an American congress must make such a journey. Let him take an excursion on the Sacramento which drains the far-famed and new Eldorado of the West. Let him stand upon the levee at New Orleans and count the numbers and the tiers of American vessels that lie there, four, five and six thick along its embankment. Let him hear the puff, puff, puff of the high pressure steamboats that come sweeping in almost every hour, perhaps from a port 2,000 miles off, from the then frozen winter of the north, to the full burning summer of the south — all inland navigation — fleets of them, as large as the world can show; with their elegant rooms, neat berths, spacious saloons and costly pianos, it may be, so that travelers can make their way to Louisville (Kentucky), as if they were on a party of pleasure. Let him survey all these, as they come in with products from the Red river, 1,200 miles in one direction, or from Pittsburg (Pennsylvania), 2,000 miles in another direction; from the western tributaries of the vast Mississippi, the thickets of the Arkansas or White river, from the muddy, far-reaching Missouri and its hundreds of branches. * * * Let him see the adventurous flatboats of western waters on which, frail bark! the daring backwoodsman sallies forth from the Wabash, or rivers hundreds of miles above, on a voyage of Atlantic distance, with hogs, horses, oxen and cattle of all kinds on board, corn, flour, wheat — all the products of rich western lands. * * *

Take the traveler where the clear, silvery waters of the Ohio become tinged with the mud from the Missouri, and where the currents of the mighty rivers run apart for miles, as if indignant at the strange embrace. Ascend with him farther to St. Louis, where, if he looks upon the map, he will find that he is about as near the east as the west, and that already thousands upon thousands of emigrants, who are borne on the wave of population that beats at the base of the Rocky Mountains, are now overleaping its summits. They will speak of him as he now speaks of New England, as far in the east. And then tell him that far west as he is he is but at the beginning of steam navigation; that the Mississippi itself is navigable about a thousand miles upward; and that steamboats have actually gone on the Missouri, on that mad and muddy stream, 2,200 miles above its mouth, and that they can go 500 miles farther still! Take him then from this land where the woodsman is leveling the forest every hour, across the rich prairies of Illinois where civilization is throwing up towns and villages, pointed with the spire of the church and adorned with the college and the school; then athwart the flourishing fields of Indiana to Cincinnati, well called "The Queen of the West" — a city of over 100,000 inhabitants, * * * — and this in a State of 2,000,000 souls, * * * where the fierce savages, even within the memory of young men, made the hearts of their parents quake with fear. * * * Show him our immense inland seas, from Green bay to Lake Ontario, not inconsiderable oceans, encompassed with fertile fields. Show him the public works of the Empire State (New York) as well as those of Pennsylvania [and Ohio]— works which are the wonder of the world, such as no one people in modern times have ever equaled. And then introduce him to the busy, humming, thriving population of New England, from the Green Mountains of Vermont, the Switzerland of America, to the northern lakes and wide sea coast of Maine. Show him the industry, energy, skill and ingenuity of those hardy people, who let not a rivulet run nor a puff of wind blow without turning it to some account; who mingle in everything wherever a cent of money is to be earned; whose lumbermen are found not only in the deepest woods of the snowy wilds of

Maine, * * *; but on the banks of the St. Lawrence, and * * * streams whose names geographers hardly know.

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Then lift him above considerations of a mercenary character and show him how New England men are perpetuating their high character and holy love of liberty, and how, by neat and elegant public buildings that adorn every village; by comfortable schoolhouses that appear every two miles or oftener upon almost every road, free for everybody, high-born and low-born, and by academies and colleges that thicken even to an inconvenience; by asylums and institutions munificently endowed for the benefit of the poor. And let him see too with what generous pride their bosoms swell when they go within the consecrated walls of Faneuil Hall, or point out the heights of Bunker Hill or speak of Concord and Lexington where their bitter enemies, the British, were crushed.

Dear Charles, if you come to America, you may make such a tour as this — the best that can be made — and I am sure your young heart will beat quick when you will see the proud spectacle of the assemblage of the representatives of all these people and all their interests within a single hall. You will revere the offspring of those revolutionary patriots, who not only left us such a heritage, won by their sufferings and their blood, and such a constitution, such a Government here in Washington regulating all the national concerns, but who left us also, in effect, thirty-four other governments, with territory enough to add twenty-four to them by and by, that regulate all the minor concerns of the people acting within their own sphere. Now, in the winter, assembling within their various capitols, from San Francisco on the Pacific ocean * * * to Augusta on the Kennebeck. Show me a spectacle more glorious, more encouraging, than this, in the pages of all history — a constellation of free States, with no public force but public opinion, moving by well-regulated law, each in its own proper orbit, around the brighter star in Washington; thus realizing, as it were, on earth, almost practically, the beautiful display of infinite wisdom that fixed the sun in the centre and sent the revolving planets on their errands. God grant it may end as with them!

In my next I will enter into details — meanwhile I will expect a long letter from you. Present my best love to your good father and mother; kiss little Paul for me; and tell a thousand things from my part to the whole family and to my best friends and acquaintances.

I am, etc.,

St. Joseph's College, Bardstown, Ky., Dec. 6, 1852.

Dear Alexander (BARDEMAEKER):[3]

I received your good letter just as I was starting from St. Louis. I was at the moment writing to my brother Francis, and he will no doubt already have communicated to you my opinion concerning your son William's coming to America. Since then I have given the matter careful thought, but am only the more confirmed in my view. I would not think I was doing right by you, nor by the friendship which I owe you on so many accounts, if I gave the slightest encouragement to William to leave his native land and come to seek his fortune in the United States. I will tell you just what I think. I conjure you, do not send your son to America. Ten to one it would be his ruin. He would find himself in misery, practically a galley-slave; that is what usually happens to young men of education who come to this country, provided they find employment at all. The business-houses, the banks, the city and State offices, the colleges, the schools, all have their employees, and when a place becomes vacant, or a new house is opened, the number of applicants is legion. How could it be otherwise in a city of 100,000 souls, where three-fourths of the inhabitants are newcomers, and this number growing every day?

[3] From the French.

It is just the same with lawyers and doctors; the city is simply encumbered with them; everywhere the walls and doors are covered with their signs.

Who are the ones that succeed then? The merchants employ their own children or the children of their near relatives and friends, and of the public employees ninety-nine per cent. are Americans, and they make great efforts to keep foreigners out of these positions. European merchants succeed in America, when they have means at their disposal. They can readily obtain credit then, and establish business houses. Poor and honest young men succeed in America if they have some education, but they have to begin by sweeping the floor and running on errands and carrying customers' bundles. Little by little they become clerks, sometimes even partners, though these cases are infrequent. Workingmen of all kinds, especially machinists, stonecutters, brickmakers, masons, street and railroad laborers, carpenters, blacksmiths, all get good wages in America, and with industry and perseverance a great many of them come to be pretty well off.

People in Europe have illusions concerning America. The greater part of the young men, who can justly claim to be something, and who know nothing of the miseries of life from experience in their families, who have received a good education, do not succeed in the least. Accordingly we see very many of them, if they have the means, go back tc the old country, and that is the best thing they can do, and I tell them so every chance I get.

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I presume I will have told you in Belgium that I wondered that the Belgian merchants and business houses were so slow in extending their commerce and establishing branch houses abroad, especially in the United States. The English, Germans, French are doing so and in general they succeed. Then later they can employ in such houses as this their sons or the sons of their friends, and success is reasonably certain for the latter. St. Louis has no Belgian houses.

New York probably has some, connected with firms in Antwerp. You should make inquiries in this line and find one of these houses, where William would be sure of being received, before you allow him to come to America. To do otherwise would be imprudent in the extreme.

Give my love, etc.

St. Louis University, March 12, 1853.

My dear FRANCIS:[4]

I have just received your good letter of the 9th of February and I thank you for it most sincerely. The news that you gave me of the indisposition of our dear brother Charles disturbs me greatly. I pray and hope that nothing bad will come of it. My malady is leaving me gradually, and I have been able to resume my little tasks and to make my customary journeys. There are no less than twenty-five letters on my table which I have to answer. My post of Procurator-General of the Province of Missouri demands much time and gives me a great deal to do.

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The great news of the day in America is the inauguration of the new President, which has just taken place in Washington with a blaze of glory. This morning the papers announce that three large banks in our neighborhood have failed. There will be a great panic in the city, where thousands of inhabitants will find themselves ruined at a blow. But all this will not prevent the railroad to the Pacific from being begun. It is a strange people in the midst of whom we live. Nothing frightens them; they will undertake anything. Sometimes they halt — stumble once in a while — but they get up again and march onward. Several great new territories are about to be formed in the Indian country, and soon the steam-engine will go out and give a shock to the buffalo and the bear of the desert; and the poor unhappy savages, what will become of them? They will no doubt be turned out and pushed back anew, farther into the sterile regions, where they will find only misery and death.

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[4] From the French.

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I will write you again early in the month, at the time set for my departure — provided, as I hope, nothing comes up to prevent my starting. Once more I must beg you not to speak of my journey to Europe to any one in Belgium whomsoever, unless to our brother Charles.

In the sweet expectation of seeing and embracing you, believe me for life, etc.

St. Louis University, Dec. 4, 1861.

My very dear FRANCIS:[5]

I am on the eve of a rather long journey and very busy, and as the winter besides is very severe, I have little time for writing letters. I am still without replies to several of mine, but I feel sure that you have written me and I attribute their failure to reach me to the unhappy circumstances in which we find ourselves since my return to America in April. Your letters may have gone astray, or been suppressed, which is the more probable; or perhaps mine have been held up. Who knows? I have received letters from Felix and Elmire, with ample news of the family, which have given me the utmost pleasure and consolation amid the sad and confused spectacles that surround us. The American newspapers are placed under the strictest police supervision, for good motives, doubtless, and can give only false or mutilated reports, from which you will obtain but a faint idea of the state of the war. I will say nothing in regard to this, you will easily guess why. But I will give some details concerning what is happening in Missouri, where the horrors of civil war seem deeper than elsewhere. It would be impossible to describe them *in extenso* and in all their blackness.

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[5] From the French.

Sensible men prophesied at the commencement of our civil troubles that the people might expect horrible scenes, but without foreseeing probably the full extent. You have read of the horrors of the first French Revolution, histories of civil wars in various ages and countries, where every thing was turmoil and confusion and robbers and assassins had free and open field for murder and devastation of property. All this will give you but a faint idea of the horrible situation to which Missouri finds herself reduced. Her own children, divided between the two great parties, the North and the South, are dipping their hands in blood and cutting one another's throats, burning and sacking one another's dwellings; while enemies from outside enter the State to glut their insatiable vengeance, and to aid eagerly in the diabolical work of devastation and heighten still further the horrors and the misfortunes of the country. To-day it is a Federal leader who is taken and put to death; to-morrow it may be a judge, sympathizing with the South, who will be assassinated in spite of his having a guard to protect him. At present there is little or no union among the citizens of Missouri; there is only hate and suspicion, and hence brigandages and vengeances without number and of every sort. The general-in-chief of the rebels in Missouri has just issued a manifesto in which he promises $200,000,000 in spoils to 50,000 brigands who will enlist under his standard. Means will be found I hope to withstand this wild Secessionist; but in any case he will do much harm. At this moment hundreds of families, poor, miserable and in want of everything are leaving the interior of the State and coming to take refuge in our city, or crossing into Illinois, having been forced to leave their sacked and burned houses and fields. This is what the detestable secession has brought Missouri to, and we are yet only at the first page of its history.

If I have time I will write you from Washington or New York before long, to which places I am called by some little business matters. You absolutely must write me as soon as you can; when I don't hear from you it makes me sad and gloomy. If you have not received my long letters I will copy them off again.

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Your devoted brother, etc.

December 23, 1861.[*]

The universal aspect of our country is really sad and mournful. A year ago here was a great united nation, prosperous and fortunate, and from a material point of view full of hope for its future glory; to-day we see it in a manner dislocated and reduced to fragments, and a beautiful land, once rich in the flowers and fruits of a peaceful agriculture, is now splashed with blood and blackened by devastating fires. Examine the map of the United States that I left at St. Michael College; throughout the great expanse from the Potomac to the Rio Grande and from the Atlantic to the Missouri, the voice of legal justice is dumb, replaced by the incessant sound of the beating drum and the deafening noise of artillery. In all this vast space the power of the law is *de facto* annulled. The law has had to make way for arms. Let us, however, take comfort; a piece of good news, coming from the highest source, announces that the calamities with which the land is afflicted are rapidly drawing near their close; that the same almighty arm that sustained the cause of Washington and his brave soldiers, to establish the glorious Constitution, will not be withdrawn from their children in a not less difficult war for its maintenance. For the moment, assuredly, we live in the shadow of a very heavy cloud, black and gloomy, which seems to envelop the entire nation as in a shroud. But please God, the eye of faith and patriotism may soon discern in the sombre cloud the bow of the promise, already announced to us, which is to envelop under its beautiful arch the coming of a calmer and more serene day. The hope of a speedy return to peace, order and law encourages and comforts us, in spite of our doubts and deep apprehensions.

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[*] Extract from letter in French to Father Boeteman of Brussels.

Just at present all eyes are turned toward England. What will she do in the Mason and Slidell affair? The characteristic motto of that nation toward America has always been "*divide et impera.*" For a long time past, and doubtless with this design, she has contributed largely to maintain abolitionism by annual contributions. The secret thought and all the efforts of *la perfide Albion* have always leaned toward overturning and breaking the Great Republic, whether in two fragments or more, in order afterward to keep the new governments in endless disputes and quarrels, if not in open warfare one against another; exploiting them meanwhile for her own interest.

From the first indication of actual separation, England has never ceased to sympathize with the South, as the most effective means to succeed in her plans. She has encouraged the rebels in all ways, except formal recognition of their independent sovereignty, and it is only too evident that she lacks but a pretext to do that, or anything else that may tend to dissolve the Union.

Her indignation, apparently so virtuous and sincere, at the capture of Mason and Slidell, need not astonish any one; nothing less was to be expected. If the English do not carry out their threats and engage in war with the United States, it will be because, after a sober second thought, they have come to the conclusion that after all, in view of their own interests, it is better to let the Northern States alone.

Altogether, judging by what one sees and hears, it is safe to say that our Americans feel easy with respect to England, and show not the least fear. The substance of the English ultimatum, sent to Washington concerning the Mason and Slidell affair, is not yet known — *sed quid quid* *sit*, those two gentlemen will not be set at liberty, neither will any apology be made for the taking of the *Trent*. If the English want to fight, why, they will fight. Where one volunteer presents himself to defend the flag against the rebels of the South, twenty will come forward with eagerness to march against the English.

I am expressing to you the pure American thought. With regard to France joining with England — which seems likely enough — it should not be forgotten what France was able to do alone against the European coalition. Not only did she manage to defend herself against all the countries united, but she beat them on their own ground and besieged them in their capitals. "Surely," say our Americans, "we need not be frightened nor discouraged at the idea of a coalition of two powers who will have to send their armies 3,000 miles across the ocean to attack us."

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St. Louis University, February, 1863.

Mr. Jos. Van Jersel, *Utenhout, Holland*:[7]

Very Worthy and Respectable Monsieur.— "Better late than never" says the old proverb. I shall say little by way of excuse for my delay in writing you. My occupations have been numerous and my journeys long; that is all that I can advance as an appeal to your indulgence and charity. To atone for my apparent negligence, I propose to write you a rather long letter. A few details regarding political matters in the United States, which the entire world is now watching, may perhaps be agreeable to you. * * *

I will begin at the beginning: that is, since I had the honor of paying you a visit at Utenhout, in the midst of the snow toward the end of December, 1860. On the 27th of March, 1861, I said farewell to my brothers in religion and to my

[7] From the French.

family and acquaintances and left Belgium. My journey to Paris and thence to Havre was agreeable and without accident. On the 30th I took my place on board the steamer *Fulton,* with my three companions. On Easter Sunday I had the consolation of offering the holy sacrifice of the mass, to commend us especially to God in the long and dangerous journey by land and sea that we had before us. On the 2d of April about noon the vessel ran in to Southampton, where it lay at anchor a good part of the day waiting for passengers and the mail. In the evening of the 4th we lost the coasts of England from view. It was still winter on the Atlantic and we had rough weather, but everything passed off favorably and without accident. The days passed agreeably on board, in the society of very intelligent people, among whom I had the happiness of finding several old and good acquaintances. Nothing especially noteworthy came up to break the habitual monotony of a long ocean voyage. I will only mention that in latitude 42° 11′ and longitude 65° 39′ we passed near an immense solitary iceberg, which resembled an ancient cathedral in ruins or an old chateau with dilapidated towers. So novel a sight, in the absence of any other, was certainly not without interest. We reached New York during the night of the 14th–15th of April.

A few hours before the arrival of the *Fulton* the great American metropolis had been thrown into the utmost confusion and consternation by the news that Fort Sumter, in South Carolina, had been captured and the great star-spangled banner of the Union lowered and torn to pieces by the Southern rebels — an irremediable and ineffaceable insult in the eyes of all America.

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When the insulting and arrogant outrage to the national flag was known, a number of the American passengers on the *Fulton* wept with rage, uttering imprecations and threats against the South. The scenes of which I was an eye-witness on landing moved me deeply; but my career is not that of earthly weapons, and I abhor war. Mine are spiritual arms. I humbly offered my poor prayers to heaven that the aroused passions might be soothed and peace come anew to cement the old Union and restore tranquillity and happiness to a country formerly so happy and prosperous.

But "there is no peace." I left New York on the 17th of April and reached St. Louis on the 19th. Throughout that 1,000-mile journey nothing was heard save the rattle of arms and cries of war, repeated from one end to the other, in every town, city and village that we passed through, and from every height, steeple and housetop floated the insulted banner.

From the statistics that have thus far been published, it is safe to assume that half a million of men have already been killed or have died in the hospitals. The property sacked and destroyed on both sides, amounts to a great many millions of dollars. The cost of the war cannot be less than two to three millions a day, and it has been going on for nearly two years. God alone, in his mercy, can put an end to these bloody and deadly combats. Thus far no one is able to see any outcome for it, and the numerous battles have not had the slightest definite result. They seem urged on by hatred, without seeing that Union by force would be but a whited sepulchre. It is a most deplorable and horrible war, in which brothers are called on to cut each others' throats and battles are often the merest butcheries.

Whence has this war arisen, and in the midst of a prosperity incomparable on earth? The man who answers this question in all its details will have a long and difficult task. I will give you the immediate cause, as it appeared to me at the outbreak of the war.

Two principal causes brought it about. The first is the question of the extension of negro slavery into the new territories. The second is the tariff question. The South has always been more favorable to free trade than the North. I am persuaded that the tariff question counts for little in the present rupture. The question of slavery is the principal, perhaps the only one. The South wishes and declares that slavery must be protected like any other property-right in all the Territories belonging to the United States. The North opposes this doctrine and wishes to confine slavery to its present limits, and that is the great difficulty and the ostensible cause of the war.

Senator Douglas and his party advocated that the decision concerning the introduction of slavery into the Territories and its protection there should rest with the citizens of those Territories. The ultra-South declared against this doctrine. The Cotton States wanted slavery protected in the Territories whether the citizens of those Territories (that is, the majority) desired it or not. This was the great cause of the division in the Democratic Convention at Charleston, which led to the nomination of two Democratic candidates for the presidency — Douglas and Breckenridge.

The South, or the Breckenridge party, knowing that the Republican party would never consent to have slavery thus forced upon the Territories, and desiring to find a pretext for separation from the Union, insisted upon this question being decided in their favor, as a condition *sine qua non* of their fidelity to the Union. The consequence was that the two Democratic candidates were defeated in the election, and Mr. Lincoln, the Republican, elected upon the platform "that slavery should be protected where it existed, but should not be extended to the new Territories."

After Lincoln's election South Carolina at once withdrew from the Union, even in defiance to the Constitution of the United States. Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas followed this rebellious course. Afterward came Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Arkansas. In fact it is probable that all the slave States would withdraw if they had the strength; namely, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri.

How has this question of slavery been able to produce results so surprising and deplorable, considering especially that all the Territories suitable for slave labor were already in the hands of the advocates of slavery? Slavery exists in the fifteen Southern States, which are the only ones, by the admission of the South itself, where it can exist advantageously. Moreover the Territories of New Mexico and Arizona, the ones, as both parties agree, adapted to slave labor, were already in the hands of the Southerners. The Northern Territories, Washington, on the Pacific slope, Colorado, Dakota, Nevada, were and are unsuitable for slave labor, and no one has ever thought of introducing slavery into them. But the South insisted absolutely upon that privilege; that is, upon the *right* to introduce slavery, even though it were useless and unreasonable. The South was striving for a point of honor, ridiculous and unreasonable — a point which she had no idea of carrying into effect.

"What," you will say, "are the two great sections of the Union quarreling over a trifle?" I reply that this is only the pretext of the quarrel. The two sections were in bad humor against each other. The extreme party in the North, or the Abolitionists, whether orators, preachers or newspaper editors, had covered the South with insults and opprobrium. The South took offense at their insults; the Southern slaveholders were indignant at being called "barbarians, sinners, dealers in human flesh," etc. The South was deeply stirred over these accusations and at seeing the possession of slaves ranked as an iniquity. They therefore determined to break all the bonds which had united them for a great many years, and separate from a people who slandered them and their institutions, particularly that of slavery. Excited by passion, and in bad humor, the Southern States have abandoned the Union.

That in my humble opinion is the origin and commencement of the great quarrel or war which is now desolating the North and South of the United States.

Whatever may be the original history of secession, and whether or not the South be right in having broken the bonds which attached it to the Union, a large number of our profound statesmen grant her the right to act thus, in the name of the national sovereignty proclaimed by 8,000,000 of free men, and she has maintained this right by existing for two years as a nation.

St. Louis, April 24, 1863.

Most Dear Paul:

I must essay to write to you a letter in English. I wish you to study and apply yourself to acquire the knowledge of that beautiful and almost universal language. Let me know how you make it out, which will decide the course of my writing. I will here sketch you a little view of the actual state and condition of the country and the principal cause of the war without entering into minor details.

As I have written before, slavery is the undoubted cause of the war at present raging in the country. Perhaps no other cause could have produced it; for though there have been sharp disputes between the different sections of the Union on the subject of the tariff, they were easily settled. Not so with slavery. Here, what one party looked upon as of divine origin and every way right, another party regarded as barbarous and wrong. There was and is no room for compromise on such a question. Still the institution of slavery in the slave States was in no immediate danger, for the Constitution of the United States guaranteed its protection and the General Government would never have set the Constitution aside — indeed it has no power to do so.

But the difficulty was about the Territories belonging to the United States. There is an immense territory sufficient to form several large States yet unsettled. The anti-slavery party, or Freesoil party, as it is called, concluded that slavery should not be extended to the Territories, though protected in the already formed States. The pro-slavery party demanded the right of carrying slavery to every foot of the

Territory. The anti-slavery party, for the first time since the organization of the Government, triumphed in the election of Mr. Lincoln to the presidency, and the pro-slavery party seceded from the Union, or rather I should say, ten or eleven of the fifteen slave States seceded and set up what they call a Confederate Government for themselves. What are called the border slave States, as Missouri, Kentucky, Western Virginia, Maryland and Delaware, have declared for the old Union; but they are made the battle-ground of the contending parties. It is evident that, according to the Constitution of the United States, no State has the right to secede from the Union. The Union was intended to be perpetual. But the Secessionists contend that the States, as separate peoples, have, at any rate, the right of revolution when sufficient cause exists; and they further contend that a sufficient cause does exist in the hostility of the free States to the institution of slavery. But I have already remarked that the General Government was bound by the Constitution to protect slavery in the States where it existed. This is true; but the slave States regarded the hostile feelings of the Northern people as a sufficient cause for the act of secession. They regarded the fact that they were excluded from the Territories as a sufficient cause.

The truth is that the present state of the country is due to an angry controversy, long ago begun, on the subject of African slavery. Several compromises between the parties had been entered into, looking to the settlement of the difficulty; but the feeling remained with the one party that *slavery is right,* and with the other that *slavery is wrong.* These two hostile feelings have culminated in a revolution, or rebellion, the most formidable that the world has ever seen. What will be the end of it? No one can say. One thing seems evident, namely, that slavery will be extinguished; for though the General Government does not claim any constitutional power to interfere with the Constitutions in the States, yet, as a war power, as a means of putting down the rebellion, the General Government does claim the power of liberating the slave; and hence the emancipation proclamation of the President more than six months ago. Thousands of slaves are making their escape from bondage and are now scattered over the free States.

But how long the war will continue no one can tell. The General Government is greatly stronger than the revolted States, but these latter can defend their own soil against superior numbers. The General Government has an immense fleet but the seceded States have strong fortifications. The resources of the General Government for sustaining armies in the field are vastly superior to those of the slave States, but the latter seem prepared for desperate extremes. Norfolk, Nashville, Memphis and New Orleans have been already captured by the Union forces, but many strongholds remain in the possession of the insurgents at this moment. According to the telegraph Charleston, South Carolina, is being bombarded anew; the result is in great doubt.

The bloodshed and the suffering caused by the war so far have been great. How could it be otherwise when the contending forces are counted by hundreds of thousands? God only knows what and when the end will be. Yet as the resources of the General Government are vastly superior to those of the seceded States, it is reasonable to conclude that the rebellion will finally, perhaps many years hence, be put down. One thing appears certain, either slavery or freedom must triumph in this gigantic contest. There will not be apt to be any more compromises. Should the rebellion be subdued, slavery may for a while linger in some of the States, but it will cease to be a great power and will gradually pass away. Slavery must either triumph in this war or be left in a condition which will insure its final extinction. Already the State of Missouri is on the eve of enacting emancipation laws, and I have no doubt that the State convention, which I understand will shortly meet, will effect this object. The friends of the human race everywhere must feel a deep interest in the fate of the Great Republic and of African slavery.

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Your devoted uncle,
PETER JOHN.

St. Louis University, Sept. 23, 1865.

My Very Dear Gustave:[8]

I have received your good letter of the 22d of June last. I think I have answered it in part. If I can trust my memory, I believe I have sent you photographs of Lincoln and Johnson. You ask for details concerning political affairs in America. I am not in the habit of mingling in matters of this sort; still I am glad to give you a little account of the course of the Government in emerging from a most terrible and disastrous crisis, as it appears to my mind.

I will begin with my arrival in this country last June. On the 19th of the month we were in sight of Sandy Hook. The American pilot had come on board the night before with his bundle of newspapers. As soon as he set foot on deck he was besieged by the curious multitude eager to learn the recent great events. The papers were devoured and discussed with avidity, for we had many politicians on board, of both hemispheres, and a great number of interested merchants.

I learned then, with consolation, and later events confirmed me in the thought, that calm and reflection were beginning gradually to take hold of the masses, after the saddest and most unfortunate of wars, and that law and order, with the total extinction of slavery, were being re-established by degrees in the States where secession had caused so much destruction and so many misfortunes. The spontaneity of the Southern people, which had precipitated so great a number of States into rebellion, has produced likewise a general return of Union sentiment. No one in the South seems now to think of hostile undertakings against the Government. The majority of the people want nothing but a chance and means to get on their feet again. True statesmanship must tend to insure a solid peace and a durable prosperity. It is to be hoped that President Johnson, in his wisdom, will set aside the vengeful agitators (the radicals) and then ere long the return to the Union will render this country more beautiful, prosperous and great than it ever has been. The war has been a great shock to the nation and very disastrous in its effects, but the wisdom of the President and the people will overcome it in the end. Johnson is beginning to inspire the greatest confidence. He appears to be the chosen man *par excellence* in these times of agitation and political divisions, to impose, like his predecessor, Andrew Jackson, his own individuality upon the administration of the Government. He will succeed in destroying the demarcation of the political parties, which have hitherto been too much in vogue in this country, and the hope is already felt that he will call to his aid a great national party, the motto of which will be "Solidity, Strength and Glory," for the reconstruction of the (formerly) United States. It is evident from all his acts that he has resolved to maintain the national union, honor and credit. Always in sympathy with the great masses and the nation's heart, there are good grounds for hoping that he will administer the Government upon large and real principles, seeking the greatest good of the greatest number. Any attempt on the part of the radicals, who are seeking by any means to put obstacles in the way of his administration, will end in their own confusion.

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[8] From the French.

The old proverb says *sunt bona mixta malis*, and that is the case to-day in Missouri. Upon emerging from the war and at the beginning of the return of peace we find ourselves in fresh trouble and in a state of cruel uncertainty. This is the way of it. The radical party has installed itself, *per fas et nefas*, at the head of the State Government. The new Constitution, which has been adopted by a slender majority, and which is publicly denounced as fraudulent, requires the clergy of all denominations, all professors of seminaries and colleges and all school teachers of either sex (including nuns) to take the following oath: "That they have at no time in the past uttered a word nor sympathized in any manner in favor of the rebellion," etc. Preaching and performing the marriage ceremony are expressly forbidden to the clergy by this law. The priests are generally agreed that, on principle, such an oath cannot be taken, because our authority does not emanate from the State and we cannot, without compromising the ecclesiastical estate, consent to take such an oath. No Catholic priest in Missouri will take it; the Protestant ministers have generally done so. The penalty for those who refuse to take this abominable *ex post facto* oath is a fine of $500 and imprisonment. The Governor has announced in a speech "that he has had the State prison enlarged and that the law shall be executed." If this cruel law is really enforced our churches will have to be closed and our schools and colleges will be ruined.

We have thus far been left in peace at St. Louis, but in the interior of the State, in places where the radicals are in a majority, religious persecution is beginning to seethe. Four priests have been cited before their tribunals "for having preached the gospel" contrary to their iniquitous law. One of the priests is actually in prison, the other three have given bail. Two Sisters of Charity have also been cited before these famous judges "for having taught children" and have been released under bail. Serious as this matter is, it has also its curious side; it is wonderful that a land so proud and jealous of its liberty can hatch so many tyrants of the lowest and most detestable kind. This law is at the same time so absurd that I am inclined to believe that the odious act, after a few vain efforts, will be smothered and expire after having seen the light of day. This black and infamous blemish in the Constitution of Missouri will, it is hoped, react promptly upon its contrivers.

The sad circumstances in which we find ourselves do not in the least interfere with our ordinary tranquillity. Each one keeps at his work as if nothing was plotting around us. This tyrannical law of Missouri being *ex post facto* is unconstitutional and therefore null and contrary to the Constitution of the United States, which prohibits laws of that sort. Meanwhile our churches remain open and we preach and administer the sacraments as usual. Our college opened on the very day of the promulgation of the law (the fourth of this month) with an attendance of about 300 pupils. We pray and keep our patience under the wings of the eagle, the emblem of the Constitution of the United States—or rather we repose without uneasiness under the safeguard of the Lord! May his holy will be accomplished in regard to us!

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Your devoted uncle, etc.

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[9]All the world seems ready to go to war. In the United States the agitation just at present is very great. There is a gleam of hope that President Johnson may succeed in the peaceable reconstruction of the Southern States; the elections in November will decide it. Among clear-sighted persons serious fears are felt that the radical party will move heaven and earth to keep itself in power, and that the shock will be terrible and fearful in its results. In Missouri we continue to be in a very critical state. The horrible test-oath, which forbids our preaching the gospel without taking it, continues in force. There are constant arrests and imprisonments.

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[9] From letter in French to Terwecoren, August 24, 1866.

[10]You say that you read with pleasure my little tales of missionary adventure among the Indian tribes. A new volume (the fifth) is soon to go to press in New York; I will make it my business to send you a copy as soon as it appears. I am working in my leisure moments on the history of the Pottawatomi tribe, which will appear probably in the course of the next year and which shall likewise be sent you.

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You speak with enthusiasm of all that you hear and read of America and express a great desire to visit this beautiful region some day. Really, I do not think your travelers can give you any proper idea of what is going on in this country, nor of its progress toward grandeur and toward the lofty position which it must occupy one day among the nations of the earth. The starry banner of the United States bears above it the emblem of grandeur, the American eagle, the same that the ancient Romans put upon their military standards. I have seen an old geographical chart, which shows the eagle soaring in the air above the great extent of North America, with the numerous islands adjacent to both coasts. He is casting a penetrating and greedy look over the vast Canada and all its dependencies, and his open beak seems ready to snatch them up. All those immense regions of which the United States occupy the centre rest under his shadow. His fine widespread tail covers all of Mexico and the adjoining regions as far as the Gulf of Darien and the Bay of Panama. And the two tips of his wings are dipped in the two oceans beyond San Domingo and the Sandwich Islands. And that is the grand future, perhaps not far off, to which the great American republic aspires, and which she will attain if she is wise. In Mexico, where the Emperor Napoleon improvised his celebrated comedy at a time when he thought the United States permanently divided, it has come to a farce in spite of him, and much more promptly and swiftly than he had intended. The "*chez nous*" will be "*chez eux*" in *la belle France* before the New Year; and it is stated as a fact that Mexico will be put under a Yankee protectorate as a preliminary move to being joined to the States.

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[10] Extract from letter in French to Henri and Clemence, November 3, 1866.

The Irish Fenians in their great hatred for *la perfide Albion* are extremely active, and this at the very moment when the United States are claiming damages from England for all the harm done their commerce during the war by the famous *Alabama* and her mates. This thorny question must be decided soon and favorably, else the English will have all the Fenians on their hands in Canada, backed by the bayonets of 100,000 Yankee veterans. They would start to-morrow if the Government said the word.

But the United States have one very dangerous weak side; they are too much led by party spirit, and they go in "neck or nothing." If they are not careful this party spirit must bring them to anarchy, toward which the radicals seem to-day to be traveling in haste. Things are at such a point here that our deep thinkers are looking for another civil war, which may become more disastrous than the first; should that calamity take place, the Great Republic will take long strides toward the ruin which she has so barely escaped. The radicals, without the least patriotism, are determined to risk everything, at any price, to maintain themselves in power. They are now working for the disfranchisement of all the conservatives opposed to their party, and to give votes to the recently enfranchised negroes who are still in a species of semi-barbarism, and to this end they are employing the most tyrannical and unjust measures. In the city of St. Louis they wish to proscribe 10,000 voters.

If they succeed in erecting their infernal yoke, there are plenty of papers that proclaim that proscription of the Catholics will soon follow. We are already proscribed in

Missouri, according to the Constitution of the State. We can no longer preach the gospel here without taking an impious and iniquitous oath. It seems to date from the time of Nero, of Henry IV, of Germany, or Henry VIII, of England. All our churches, cemeteries, charitable institutions, have to support enormous taxes, while all the sectarian establishments, including those of the Jews, are exempt from taxation. That is what the much vaunted liberty of our grand and famous Republic has come to. It is strange and startling to see the great number of tyrants and monsters she has been able to bring forth in so short a time. In Missouri we are surrounded by German magistrates of '48.

Your devoted uncle, etc.

November 10, 1868.[11]

On the 3d of this month we had the happiness of seeing the end of our great political agitations in the election of the new President. For months and weeks previous it seemed as though we were on the eve of another civil war and as if the whole land would be deluged with blood. The day of the election arrived, a lovely day; the civil authorities closed all the drinking places and a vigilant police was on foot. To everybody's surprise the great day of the election was in St. Louis the quietest day of the year; the next day the city resembled more a Belgian convent. Ever since the election an unparalleled tranquillity has succeeded the numberless menaces and all apprehensions of mobs and violence.

I have never felt the least doubt of Grant's election. He is the future President and the choice of the people by a vast majority, and all seem now to accept him cheerfully. Grant has already announced his motto, "Let us have peace," and it is hoped that he will apply himself with firmness to re-establishing and conserving the old Constitution in all its integrity. The Democrats seem to expect this and it is quite possible that the radicals, who to-day fill all the lucrative offices with the assurance of holding them until the end of Grant's administration, will gradually let things drop back into their regular constitutional course. Let us wait patiently and hope.

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[11] Extract from letter in French to Ch. DeCoster, Belgium.

CHAPTER VII.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION.

Turbulent foreigners — The boasted liberty and tolerance of America — Anarchy has arrived — Mobs and violence — Predicts annexation of Cuba, Hawaii, Mexico and Canada — Contrasts material and moral condition — The Know-nothings — The Church and party politics — Test Oath in bad odor — Supreme Court decision — Inequality of taxation.

St. Xavier College, Cincinnati, Aug. 2, 1854.

Dear Francis:[1]

I HAVE just received your good letter, etc.

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I am at present accompanying the Father Provincial in his visits to our establishments in Ohio and Kentucky. I shall be back in St. Louis about the 20th of this month. The heat has been excessive in Cincinnati for the last month. A very large number of people have died from sunstroke, twelve yesterday. For my part I suffer greatly, and find no solace save in the bathtub.

There is much excitement everywhere in the United States against our holy religion, and as fast as the radicals and reds arrive from Europe the excitement increases. Several churches have been set on fire already and there is open talk of murder and pillage. Every day the papers tell of attacks on Catholics, especially on the Irish. It is certain that a priest cannot appear on the streets in Cincinnati without being insulted by renegade Germans, Swiss and Italians. These gentlemen are in their element in the States. As soon as they are able and can gather the force, a system of persecution unknown as yet in America will be established.

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[1] From the French.

St. Louis University, Nov. 28, 1854.

My dearest ELMIRE:[3]

I have received your dear letter, etc.

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I have no great personal news to impart just at present. I am quite well, I thank God. I am now in Ohio, now in Kentucky, sometimes in the extreme western part of the State of Missouri. Our colleges, residences and missions are very far apart, and I have to go with the Father Provincial in all his visits. Though I have my head and hands always full of business, it is not of a nature to overburden me and I am always happy among my brothers in all the different districts. There is one thing, however, that gives me anxiety from time to time. I hold the general or common purse and have to supply all needs; and this purse is never full; the greater part of the time it is flat; while I receive demands from all sides, especially from our poor Indian missions. Those poor Indians are always present to my thoughts. I frequently receive letters and very pressing invitations from them to return among them.

Last September the Bishop of New Mexico, on his return from Rome, was absolutely determined to take me along with him among the tribes of the Pueblos, Comanches and Navajos, who occupy a great territory in his vast diocese. He had been authorized to that effect by our superiors in Europe; but I could not at that moment leave my post here. It is probable, and I hope, that in the course of coming spring I shall be able to return once more among the Indian tribes, especially those who have been thus far most forsaken. Poor unfortunates! They are deprived of all religious succor, of all instruction and consolation. They are indeed deserving of pity. Pray often for their conversion.

I cannot say much of the United States. This vast land, with all its advantages, must grow great and mighty. No doubt the European papers speak of it often; but the American liberty and tolerance, so highly boasted, exist less in this Great Republic than in the most oppressed country of Europe. Catholic churches are burned and those who try to prevent it are assassinated. In the city of Ellsworth they snatched one of our Fathers from his abode; despoiled him of all his coats; tarred and feathered him and afterward rode him upon a rail. He was borne up the principal streets of the place, with the most outrageous and indecent insults. All the city applauded it — this horrible scene. They made it a crime to this priest to come and preach and say mass to the Catholics!

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[3] From the French.

St. Joseph's College, April 19, 1855.

Dear Charles and Mimi:[8]

It is really a long time since I have received a letter from you. I have written you often, too, and to Sylvie, Elmire and Rosalie, and I am waiting impatiently for some news from the family. I fear that your thoughts and those of my nearest and dearest nieces turn but seldom toward America, where you have a brother who thinks of you constantly and never ceases to form vows for your happiness and theirs. An expedient has occurred to me, which I hope may prove successful. In January I wrote to our correspondent in New York to send you by the first boat for Antwerp, in Mr. Key's care, the latest and handsomest map of the United States. It has been on the way since February, and Gustave Van Kerkhove has been charged with looking after it when it arrives.

Well, then, you are to hang this map somewhere in your house where it will be in plain sight, and I am sure you will think oftener of me, who have lived for so many years in this country, and have ranged over this vast region from New York to the mouth of the Columbia, and from New Orleans to Halifax in Nova Scotia and as far as the glaciers of the Athabasca north of the Rocky Mountains. You will let your eyes travel over what I have traveled in reality, in many different fashions and amid thousands and thousands of dangers; in ocean vessels, in steamboats, in skiffs, in bark canoes, in dugouts; in vehicles of every description, on railroads, on horseback and on foot.

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[8] From the French.

Last year I had planned to resume my travels in the desert in the course of the present spring; but a war[4] of extermination against the Sioux and several other tribes is soon to take place, which obliges me to defer my journey until better times. Poor, unfortunate Indians! They will have a terrible adversary to meet with; their chances are but small; they are drawing near their last scene. It matters not how great the provocations and wrongs of the whites against the Indians; the latter are always the dupes and victims. It is thus in this present case.

I lately wrote to Francis that we were advancing rapidly toward anarchy; we are there already. Everything indicates a violent persecution of our holy religion. Our churches are being burned; Catholics, priests and nuns are publicly insulted; preparations are being made in certain places for more terrible excesses. Mobs are the order of the day. Poole, a prizefighter, is murdered by a tough of his own species, in New York, and demonstrations and honors are paid this wretch at his interment, such as no President of the United States has ever received. It was a true ovation, in which thousands turned out to take a part. It is evident that such a state of things cannot last long. Liberty, in this country, is a perversion of the word; it is rather pure license which has got the upper hand and is advancing with head in air. The unhappy land is flooded with crimes and misdeeds of every sort. Every honest man's heart bleeds, but they are in a great minority. The Protestant ministers in general, and the Presbyterians or Calvinists especially, are the great instigators and promoters of all sorts of outrages and of an open persecution of the Catholics.

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[4] The Harney campaign against the Sioux as a result of the Grattan Massacre. See footnote, p. 1216.

Your devoted brother, etc.

St. Louis University, July 10, 1855.

—— CONWAY:

Most Honorable Sir.— Owing to my long absence from St. Louis I have delayed answering your very kind favor for which indeed I feel very grateful and thank you sincerely. I learned with the greatest pleasure, that both you and your lady are in the enjoyment of good health, and am happy to know that the maps of the United States, etc., have reached you. It would afford me at all times the greatest satisfaction to render you any service in my power, either in the transmission of information or otherwise, as may be most acceptable to you. Command me, I shall consider it as a great honor and a very agreeable task.

A few passing reflections on America, by one who has been an inhabitant of it since 1821, and a quiet observer of passing events, who never meddled, but with his poor little missions and their cares around him, may perhaps afford you a moment's pleasure; and with this alone in view, though grieved myself at the actual aspect of affairs in this country — for we live in a state of uneasiness, hanging between hope and fear — I send them to you.

Nowhere on the globe is the spirit of progress so rife; the go-ahead, railroad, and lightning principle in such full operation, and popular opinion so omnipotent as in this country. Nowhere else on earth are to be found, in the same community, so many elements of discord, so many isms; and ultraism is the culmination of all other isms, and the besetting evil of the day. In politics, morals, social intercourse, religion, everything, the tendency is to extremes. The United States would truly be the wonder of the world, if the moral condition of the country were to correspond with the marvelous unfolding of its material resources; with the astonishing increase of its inhabitants; with its immense and almost unbounded territory which threatens eventually to swallow Cuba and its numerous islands around, and the Sandwich Islands in the Pacific. In the long run, it must incorporate the whole of Mexico and will not rest till the two Canadas have been added to the mighty confederacy. Add to all this the wonderful prosperity of its ever-increasing commerce and wealth.

Scarcely seventy years have rolled by since the whole country west of the Alleghany Mountains, now filling up with a dense population, was one continued wilderness, the abode of numerous Indian tribes, which, like the snow before the rising sun, have melted and disappeared at the approach of their ever dreaded foes, the pale-faced European settlers or their descendants.— On the waters of the lakes and rivers which drain the middle or great Mississippi valley, on which at present are seen hundreds of beautiful steamers and thousands of crafts of various dimensions, crowded with passengers and laden with the rich produce of various climes, a few years ago was met the solitary Indian canoe, descending or slowly ascending the rivers and crossing the lakes, with its small band of savage painted warriors adorned with eagle feathers and armed with bows and war clubs. How wonderful the change! Now, along these same waters, hundreds of cities and villages are springing up with the utmost speed and rapidity, as if by enchantment. I have known St. Louis, Cincinnati, Pittsburg, when comparatively small villages; the number of inhabitants in each will soon reach over 200,000. Ten years ago Chicago and Milwaukee were only little trading posts, hardly thought of or known; the first counts already 80,000 and the latter 40,000 inhabitants. All these great cities are perfect bee-hives, filled with industry. As you travel along these waters, or penetrate into the interior, you find the forests fast disappearing and large and beautiful parks and fields taking their place, with their farms and barns filled with grain, well stocked with numerous herds of horned cattle, or with sheep and large bands of horses. Railroads and macadamized roads are crossing in all directions. English, Irish, German, French, emigrants from every country and from every clime, have come here in the hope of bettering their condition in life, a prospect which they could never realize in the country of their birth, owing chiefly to its dense population.

The moral aspect, however, of this country differs widely from the picture drawn of its material prosperity; for here all the European vices and crimes are found, I dare say, more deep and dark. The depraved, the criminals let loose, or who have escaped from justice, the vagabonds and scum of every country come here to find a congenial home and only serve to increase that moral disorganization which the numerous American Protestant sects, Mormonism included, were fomenting already so much by their destructive principles.

In a country which prides itself on its unbounded liberality and liberty we might have hoped that the Catholic religion, if not protected, would at least have been screened from persecution. This is no longer the case. A party has arisen under the name of "Know-nothings," the principal aim of which appears to be, should they be able to reach it, to crush our holy religion throughout the land. The members of this secret society are bound by abominable oaths and extend their innumerable branches through every State. It may be said, in general, that the ministers of all the different Protestant sects belong to it; many have become notorious by exciting the rioters in various parts to burn churches; to insult publicly priests and even religious ladies [sisters, nuns, etc.]; they are trying every nerve to bring forward a code of anti-Catholic blue laws; and threaten to establish inquisitorial tribunals wherever their power might extend.

This picture, sad and shameful as it may appear in this nineteenth century, is not, however, without its better side.

The American nation is a great, imitative people; they cannot live without some or other great excitement. In their time Fanny Elssler, the dancer, and Jenny Lind, the singer, were idolised by them and called divine. Kossuth was the idol during six months; he tried with success his fortune at it, and he issued bonds and gathered a good round purse while his excitement lasted. In short, he returned to Europe incognito, leaving his dupes ashamed of themselves for having been so craftily humbugged by that greatest humbug of the age, as he now stands here acknowledged by even his once greatest admirers. The present anti-Catholic excitement, though of a very different nature from the above facts, can possibly not last long; other matters may soon present themselves that will attract more and all their attention. The anti-Catholic movement of England is only aped at, at present, in the United States. Witness the ridiculous nunnery questions in both countries. England had the wisdom to leave it alone and the Yankee legislating parsons of Boston burned their fingers at it and are now held forth to scorn by their very adherents who placed them in office.

At first I feared that the Know-nothing movement would prove disastrous to the Catholic church. I feared that the great majority of the American people, constituted as it is by Protestants and quasi infidels and those in general who take no thought of religion, would unite to put down the Church. This fear was increased by the recollection of the facts that mobs had burned convents and churches with impunity in some of our eastern cities. I saw no hope for Catholicity but in the promise: "Lo! I am with you all days," etc. But now, even humanly speaking, I feel confident that instead of being injured, the Church will be benefited by this Know-nothing warfare against it. Political parties are generally tolerably equally divided. Recent State elections have shown that Know-nothingism is not all-powerful and it is more than probable that the majority of the American people will be found on the side of those principles with which Catholicity in this country has been identified. The Church identifies itself with no political party, but her enemies, the Know-nothings, have assailed all who are opposed to them as the tools and minions of the Pope and Church. Know-nothingism includes Protestantism in all its shades and degrees, from Episcopalianism to the most inconsiderable sect. Its fundamental principle is opposition to the Church, opposition to foreigners is a secondary malice. A Protestant foreigner makes the best, or rather the worst sort of a Know-nothing.

Now I firmly believe that the result of this political agitation will be that thousands will become Catholics, and that tens of thousands will have their prejudices removed, who, but for the present state of things, would remain enemies of the Church because ignorant of her claims. Already I perceive a disposition on the part of the great party opposed to the Know-nothings, to defend the Church with which they have been *nolens volens* identified. The Democrats (for they constitute the majority of the anti-Know-nothing party) will feel bound to look into the question of Catholicity in order to meet the objections, arguments and misrepresentations of their opponents. Moreover they will sympathize with the Catholics; they will become hostile to Protestantism in general; it will be their interest and pleasure to expose its frailties and follies. Woe to Protestantism when men of sense begin to examine it with the disposition to find fault with it! Woe to it when fact and logic and ridicule are brought to bear upon it! It is needless to say that all that is necessary in order to conviction to the superior claims of the Catholic Church is that these claims be examined without prejudice. These claims will be thus examined, now perhaps for the first time, by vast masses of the people, and be assured that the result will be a glorious one for the cause of truth. The conflict which the preachers mainly have brought on will well-nigh annihilate their influence and strengthen the Catholic Church in the United States. For such a result I confidently look.

Permit me, on the present occasion, to express to you my most sincere thanks and gratitude for the many favors you have so kindly bestowed on me during my visits to my native land. I shall never forget the interview you procured me with his highness, the Duke of Brabant. We pray daily at the holy altar, during the sacrifice of mass, that the Lord may preserve this most Christian Prince, and his august family, for the welfare and happiness of Belgium, and may continue to grant them his choicest blessings. We receive regularly the *Précis Historiques* of Father Terwecoren, which frequently gives very interesting details of the Duke and Duchess, and which we always peruse with the greatest pleasure.

Please present my kindest regards and respects to Mrs. Conway, and believe me to be, etc.

November 26, 1866.[5]

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My personal views are not worth speaking of. You know the routine of our houses — we get up early in the morning; about ten o'clock in the evening we go to bed; in the meantime every one works at his little tasks.

My health is, thank God, pretty good just at present. I seldom have recourse to the doctor and still less often to his drugs. Two little bottles have stood full on my mantel for the last three months to bear witness that the druggist has been appealed to in my behalf. Thus far I have done nothing but look at them and take care that they do not evaporate, for perhaps I might want them later. I shall soon enter upon my sixty-seventh year, an age when ordinarily the overcoat covers a multitude of infirmities. I shall end in believing that I bear my years pretty well, for everybody

[5] Extract from letter in French to Nephew Paul.

tells me so, and I only make them laugh when I try to assure them that my end is drawing near.

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You ask me about the political situation in the United States. I gave you some details in my last letter. Since then the elections have taken place, and despite the formidable opposition of a pronounced majority, the radical minority has won a signal victory. Nobody wonders at it; the radicals hold the power and make use of it *per fas et nefas* without the least scruple, and risk and dare everything regardless of the consequences to the country to perpetuate their odious power.

The thing that is especially agitating the Union at this moment is the tendency of the radicals to try at any cost to crush the South entirely. The Southerners risked everything in their efforts to separate from the Union while preserving their honor intact, and to-day, conquered and yielding, they have returned heart and soul to the Union, attached to the Government and desiring only peace; and the radicals seek to impose conditions upon their return so humiliating and impracticable that the South looks on them with horror and will never accept them.

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Should the radicals succeed in their schemes, it is evident that the land is making rapid progress toward anarchy and all the inevitable miseries that it brings with it. As far as religious persecution is concerned, what I think is this: The radicals will not find it easy to bring it about in a land where the spirit of liberty of conscience established by Washington is still held in great honor. Every one fears, and with reason, that after the Catholics his own turn would come. At the last Missouri elections the radicals must have seen that the impious test-oath which the priests refuse to take, is in very bad odor even among the greater part of our Protestant sectarians. But for the unjust and iniquitous disfranchisement of 25,000 conservative voters, the new

State Constitution with all its impious, anti-Christian, unjust and tyrannical laws would be already overturned and trampled under foot. Opposition to this radical persecution is so strong in St. Louis that up to the present they have not dared to invoke their impious laws against the Catholics, etc.

January 26, 1867.[*]

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Minds are still very much agitated in the United States. You will have learned from the papers that a radical ticket was elected, by means of fraud at the last Missouri elections and that we are at the mercy of these gentlemen. A good case has just been decided finally by the Supreme Court. Five judges out of nine pronounced against the execrable test oath; so to-day we can preach the Lord's gospel without being exposed to fines or imprisonment. Taxes, however, continue to weigh heavily upon Catholic institutions, while those of the Protestants and Jews are exempt. Our University of St. Louis has had to pay an enormous tax, about $6,000, whereas the Presbyterian university alongside of us does not pay a cent. Our orphan asylums, hospitals, poor-schools, suffer greatly in this way. That is how matters stand with us in the great and famous Republic. But we do not despair of a better future.

[*] Extract from letter in French to Ch. De Coster, Heyndonck, Belgium.

CHAPTER VIII.

UNCLASSIFIED LETTERS — LARGELY PERSONAL.

First aspirations for mountain travel and labor — Bad Hand Fitzpatrick — A glimpse of Ireland in 1843 — Writes Dr. McLoughlin about missions — Charles Larpenteur about his soul — Zephyr Rencontre about the Sioux — Draws his own portrait — The devil and jokes — Advice to an intending Oregon emigrant — A puzzling letter to a Provincial — Answers charges made against his writings — Denig's studies — Bridger's children — A relaxation — Old friends up the river — Has drawn some maps — Dining with the great — An interview with President Lincoln — Gold in the mountains — Pleads for Sioux murderers — The Jesuits and the war-draft — Tells at last what he knows about gold — The southwestern Indians — Gratitude and a meerschaum — About authorship of his letters — Early Nebraska history — The Church and Indian agents — Last plans.

Reverend and Very Dear Father in Jesus Christ:[1]

I RECEIVED your letter of July early this month. I was beginning to fear that you too had deferred your answer to the Greek calends. Will you believe it, Reverend Father? Since the month of June, I have filled up a score of sheets; I have written to fathers and brothers whom I cherish the most in the world, at St. Louis and roundabout. Well, I have received in return, aside from your letter, *five lines*. Ah! how gladly would I attribute this afflicting delay to the negligence of the postal authorities. Here, in this veritable corner of the world, remote from our brothers and friends, surrounded with all sorts of miseries, poor as hairless rats, constantly witnessing the most revolting scenes, which are at the same time irremediable, in the midst of strangers and infidels, I will tell you plainly, every letter that we receive makes a great feast-day for us. Ah! if they knew the joy and consolation, which news from them brings us, and how, after we have received them, our ardor and zeal revive, in the most arduous functions of the ministry, I am sure that each one of them would take pains to contribute his mite to aid us so effectually. I have only a few minutes to give you to-day, the courier is waiting impatiently; but you shall soon receive a longer letter.

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[1] Unaddressed letter (in French) dated Dec. 18, 1839.

I notice in your letter, with very real satisfaction, that you still persevere in your good resolution of devoting yourself wholly to the conversion of the savages. Perseverance, Father, will bring you to your goal. I think, however, that for the moment you are fulfilling your real mission. I would not dare nor wish to have any hand in withdrawing you from it. If it were a question of opening a mission in the mountains, for example, then I should say to you, try to get there as soon as possible, for the Protestants are preparing for that campaign; thousands of well-disposed savages are awaiting you, and the contamination of the whites has not yet spoiled these people; they will listen to you with pleasure, they will follow your precepts with docility and willingly fall in line under the standard of Jesus Christ. It is a healthy country; sickness is unknown; a sick man would soon regain his health there; no one dies except from famine, force or fire. Is it not thus that our predecessors died? What I tell you is merely what I have heard from mountain travelers. But here things look very different. I would not dare advise any one to come here. The great profit that there is in the liquor traffic, and the ease with which it can be brought in, throws the dregs of all the States upon us. They flood the country with this veritable scourge of the Indian, and are turning the heads of all of them. I do not mean to say that we are doing absolutely nothing; by baptizing children, we doubtless open the gate of salvation to a large number. I have often noticed that many of them seem only to await the holy rite of baptism to go and take possession of their eternal happiness, for they die almost as soon as they receive it. Enough about this.

(Letter not complete.)

St. *Louis*, May 10, 1849.

Colonel McKAY:

Dear Sir.— When I had the honor of calling at your house, before your departure for Fort Leavenworth, I regret that the thought did not strike me of speaking and recommending to you, Captain Fitzpatrick. Were he to be attached and to accompany the expedition to Fort Hall, he would indeed be a great acquisition to the party.— The captain is identified with the whole of that region, having spent the greater part of his life in it. He knows the localities well, and is acquainted with all the tribes who reside in it.— Captain Fitzpatrick is too well known to need any recommendation. I had the pleasure and happiness of traveling in his company during the whole summer of 1842, being my second expedition to the mountains, and every day I learned to appreciate him more and more.

The captain arrived in St. Louis two days ago. He would willingly accompany the expedition, should the Government approve of it. He is still in its service as Indian agent over the whole upper region of the Platte river.— His attendance would, in my humble opinion, be of the greatest advantage to the expedition.

Colonel, please to excuse my boldness, in writing to you on such a subject. I do it from the best of motives and with the best of intentions. I need scarcely add, that, should you approve of this suggestion, a note immediately addressed to the proper authorities here, and thence telegraphed to Washington would enable you to secure the valuable services of Captain Fitzpatrick in time to meet you at Fort Laramie.

I remain, etc.

Liverpool, July 7, 1843.

Reverend and Most Dear Father:

No doubt your Reverence must feel anxious to receive a letter from your poor unworthy servant. I will not enter into the minute details relating to our journey, for we had an editor of the State of New York with us, and the papers will reach you before this. I was as usually pretty much indisposed and the same evening of the day I left York I paid my tribute to the sea. We had the best of captains, the most polite cabin passengers as usual of all nations, and upward of 150 quiet steerage passengers. Every Sunday we had a sermon and attended by all, showing the greatest attention and respect. Our progress at sea for the first twelve days was cheering in the highest degree, during which we made more than two-thirds of our journey; next followed some eastern winds, and at last we found ourselves becalmed in the channel. Passengers became impatient; they left the vessel in crowds in small fishing boats, and I followed the bishops in a ship to a most delightful little village called Court McSherry on the southern shore of Ireland. In an instant the whole little village was in commotion; the news of the landing of two American bishops and two priests spread like the fires of the far western prairies, among the should-be happy and peaceful, but oppressed inhabitants of the village and its neighborhood. An English officer shortly after our landing waited on us. Though very cautious and polite, uneasiness was very perceptible in his countenance, the more so as it had been spread about that French officers were expected to land under the disguise of priests. A few days afterward the London *Times* had a whole rigmarole on the subject.

The morning after our landing, being the Feast of St. Peter, we celebrated the holy sacrifice to return thanks to God for our preservation and to call for blessings upon Ireland while she is so nobly struggling for her rights and liberty. The church was crowded, and more sincere piety and devotion I never beheld. At the elevation of the sacred host the whispering prayers of the prostrated hundreds struck me with awe and veneration, and the expressions that caught my ear replenished with the most holy faith, drew tears from my eyes.

After mass we proceeded to Cork, via Randon, in a jaunting-cart, a distance of about twenty-six miles. It was in Randon that the celebrated Doctor England performed his first mission in his native land. Judge of the old prejudices of the place when Orangemen wrote on its gates: "Here Jew, idolater and pagan may enter but not a Papist." The distich the servant of Dean Swift wrote underneath you know too well for me to repeat it. The country between Court McSherry and Cork is most delightful and highly cultivated; it is undulating and regularly divided into squares representing a checker-board. We had the inexpressible pleasure of shaking the hand of the second apostle of Ireland, the celebrated Father Matthew. I asked him whether there was any truth in the rumor spread in the United States of his visiting that country. His answer was that he hoped next spring to visit it. I paid my respects to the Right Reverend Doctor Murphy, Bishop of Cork, a most apostolical man and founder of many monasteries. His library consists of upward of 30,000 volumes.

On Friday evening we proceeded to Dublin by stage, where we arrived the next day at four in the afternoon. I proceeded to the house of our Fathers and was received with the greatest kindness and politeness. On Monday I visited Daniel O'Connell in company of Bishop Hughes. What a man! I cannot express my sensations and feelings on that occasion! Never did I behold a brighter eye, a more benevolent face and a more imposing and commanding person. His words flow like honey from his lips; he enraptures and captivates and places you at your ease in a moment, just like an old friend and acquaintance. As we expressed a desire of assisting at the repeal meeting in Dublin he offered us to ride with him in his own carriage, which we gladly accepted. The procession which passed by his house lasted for three hours. It was supposed that upward of 160,000 people attended. We were literally carried to the place where this immense multitude were to meet. The sight was sublime, the order perfect, and Irish eloquence flowed like torrents and cataracts from many an orator. The most conspicuous speakers were *Daniel O'Connell*, Mr. Grattan, son of the famous lawyer of that name, and John O'Connell. The meeting lasted for five hours and thousands must have gone home with sore throats for they kept up a constant roar of applause and hurrahs.

I will relate to you two little incidents as a sample of the warm feeling of that nation. An old woman had come many a mile to look at the Liberator. She had forced her way with difficulty through the immense crowd; she had even climbed on the platform from whence O'Connell spoke. I stood near him; she asked me, "Is this the man?" At my answering yes, she pulled his coat exclaiming—"Sir, let me look at you!" He turned with a smile and a bow. A gift of a thousand pounds could not have been more welcome to her. Another old man had reached the carriage. He took the hand of the Liberator and with tears in his eyes he exclaimed—"I have come far to see you, Sir, and to touch this hand; now I am happy and return home rejoiced." As the man retired O'Connell whispered aloud "*What a nation!*" his broad chest heaved. No doubt his benevolent heart answered to his whispering —"They must be free."

St. Ignatius' Mission, July 18, 1845.

To the Honorable Mr. McLoughlin, Esq.:

Most Dear Sir.—I received your kind favor at the Dalles and I return to you my sincere thanks for the good news and information you gave me concerning New Caledonia. Having preceded Father Nobili to Walla Walla I left a letter with the very kind and good Mr. McKinlay, for him, with a request to follow the brigade and to pass the winter among those interesting Indians. Next summer or spring he is to return to make his report, and I hope arrangements will be made to establish a permanent mission in that quarter. Father Nobili in his letter to me appeared to be very desirous to undertake the task. May the Lord bless his endeavors, and bless all the gentlemen of the honorable company who have taken so warm a part on the subject.

I arrived on the 12th instant at the mission of St. Ignatius a few miles below the Kalispel Bay. Since the commencement of the present year about 600 Indians of the upper and lower Kalispel tribes have been baptized. I will probably leave to-day to visit the Flatbow and Kootenai Indians, who have expressed a desire to see me for these three years past. My next thoughts are to proceed to the numerous and treacherous Blackfeet; the moment appears to be rather unfavorable on account of a late battle which has taken place between them and the Flatheads and Kalispels. The Blackfeet lost five chiefs and sixteen warriors, and many were wounded. The Kalispels or Pend d'Oreilles had five killed, the Flatheads only one. The Indians think it a most dangerous expedition at present, though all are willing to accompany me thither. If I succeed in my visit to our most implacable enemies and penetrate their country to the hunting ground of the friendly Crows, I may thence once more proceed eastwardly to the civilized world for the interest and strengthening of our different missions (this last point I tell you confidentially and as not as yet altogether certain).

In case of your going to the old continent, I wish you beforehand a most happy and prosperous voyage. Your visit to England will certainly benefit in a great measure the cause of our holy religion in Oregon. I will write from St. Louis to Father Jenkins in London, where you will find a letter concerning the missions of this country. We are happy indeed to have found in you so kind a benefactor and protector, and certainly your endeavors to promote the interests of religion and morality among the different classes of inhabitants in the country will assuredly meet with its deserved reward in this world and hereafter. Probably you may hear of some reports as coming from the Reverend Mr.

Soderini. I deem it necessary to acquaint you that I have found myself in the unhappy necessity of dismissing him from our Society. I learned with great grief of the death of the Honorable Mr. Rae; it must greatly afflict his numerous friends, and bring deep mourning in his family; may the Lord have pity on his soul, and let us take, Dear Sir, in the spirit of religion and with resignation the painful visitations the Lord permits to befall us, keeping our eyes constantly attached toward heaven.

Please, Dear Sir, to give my best respects to your good lady, to Mr. and Mrs. Douglas and to the gentlemen at Vancouver.

I remain with the profoundest esteem and respect,

Most Dear Sir, etc.

P. S.— The Reverend Father Hoeken requests me to send his best respects to you. Father Ravalli is here daily expected. I wrote rather in a hurry. The Indians are saddling my horses.

If any letters from Belgium for me should arrive at Vancouver to your address, please to leave orders to have them sent to the Reverend Father Hoeken.

St. Louis University, Dec. 17, 1849.

Mr. Ch. Larpenteur, *Baltimore, Md.:*

My Dear Sir.— I received your very kind and interesting favor of the 4th instant two days ago. I am indeed sorry to hear of the continuance of your indisposition, the consequence of your many exposures, no doubt, in times past. I hope it will not be permanent. I also begin to suffer from the same cause, with my share of provocation during several years, for such attacks. In fact, disguise it as we may, old age, like the cholera, has its premonitory symptoms, and will creep slowly but persistently into our entire frame. I read with the greatest pleasure the edifying sentiments you have expressed to me in your letter; permit me to say a few words in reply on so important a subject. I doubt not but you will receive my poor little advice as coming from a friend who sincerely loves and esteems you, and who, like Father Point, has always thought, since he had the pleasure of making your acquaintance, "that it would take but a little time and exertion on your part to become a good and perfect Christian."

You tell me "that you visited several of the churches in Baltimore, and you admire their beauty of structure and the holy and divine services performed in them." Only one step more is necessary for you, dear friend; join with heart and mind in those latter; approach with a contrite and humble heart the holy tribunal of penance; partake of the bread of angels, now that you have so favorable an opportunity and are surrounded by many good and zealous priests; and be assured beforehand, you shall find an inestimable treasure, a source of consolations and delights, a peace of soul and mind which you would in vain look for in the world. You lived for many years far away from all opportunities of practicing the duties of your holy religion; avail yourself of the present occasion and make a sincere return.

For the good of your little children, you express a wish and desire to accompany us and to settle near us in the Indian country. I appreciate highly your offer, more for us than for yourself, and I hope it may at some future day be realized. We contemplate starting out next spring for the Indian Territory, but have not as yet determined the spot where we shall establish ourselves. The whole season may probably be spent in visiting the various tribes and sounding their dispositions, before any decision will be taken on this subject. Once determined upon, we will then take the necessary measures to form a settlement, and most of the half-breed families on the upper Missouri have promised me already that they are willing to join with us in the undertaking. Your presence and experience among the Indians will, no doubt, further our own endeavors in converting and civilizing the heathen nations — such being the principal and chief object we have in view in penetrating and settling on their *lands. In due time I shall* let you know our proceedings and determinations on this subject.

I have the honor to be, etc.

Dear Monsieur ZEPHYR:[3]

I hasten to reply to your good letter of the 6th from St. Joseph. I am really very sorry that I am unable again this spring to come among my good friends in the Sioux country; but I have so much business on my hands here, with nobody to take my place, that my superiors have put off my departure to the Indian country to some other time; when, I cannot say. There is nothing that I have more at heart, and I feel a great desire and plenty of courage to return to a post which I regret constantly, and to spend my days in laboring for the happiness and salvation of the Indians. But I dare not make any positive promises; it depends upon my superiors. I hope that before long they will be able to replace and release me.

I thank you very cordially for having so well discharged my commission, and for all that you have said to the Sioux. Dear Zephyr, continue still to give good advice and counsel to the savages and the good Lord will give you credit for it. Tell them from me that I often think of them; that I desire ardently to see them again; that I pray daily for their happiness; that they must take care not to offend the Great Spirit, who always takes pity on his good children, and who will send them Black-robes to instruct them in the word and the prayer which alone can make man happy on earth and happy for eternity in heaven.

You tell me, dear Zephyr, in your letter that you came to

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[3] To Zephyr Rencontre, June 11, 1850.

St. Joseph at my request, and that you received the commission from me by a Mr. Entoine. This is really some mistake. I have never given such a commission to anybody. In future don't believe reports of this kind. When I have any request to make, I shall make it by letter. Adieu! All sorts of good wishes from me to all your family, to all my friends and acquaintances, and to the Indians whom I had the pleasure of meeting on my last journey.

Your devoted Father and friend.

October, 1850.

My Very Dear SILVIE:[a]

I have just received your dear letter of the 15th of July, and I hasten to reply to it. You announce to your Uncle Pierre one more consolation: he is so inclined to share the happiness of those who are happy, especially when it is a question of a little niece called Silvie. So then, praise be to the Good Lord for all that has been done, for I have a solid hope that it is his holy will that has been accomplished. I am glad, very glad, of your union with Mr. Edmond De Bare, and my only regret is that I was not there to bless you both, and to share with your dear parents and friends the joys of the occasion.

Since I now love my nephew, Mr. De Bare, as much as I love my niece Silvie, you must be careful to give him a faithful description of your uncle, so that if I should happen in on him in your absence, he could recognize me without ever having seen me. Uncle Pierre, tell him, is a man of medium size, with gray hair, tending to white. The centre of his wide face (a foot, or near it), is occupied by a nose with which a Greek or a Roman would not find much fault. Its nearest neighbor is a mouth of ordinary size, which hardly ever opens save to laugh or to make others laugh. It makes people love the Good Lord in that manner.

[a] Extract from a letter in French to a niece.

The rest resembles a man of fifty years, who weighs 210 pounds. If ever you build a new house, give the door of my chamber six inches extra width, because I don't like to be bothered in getting into a room. Joking aside, a thousand compliments to my dear nephew, etc.

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[4]I have just received your letters of the 14th of last September. The Reverend Father Provincial, being somewhat indisposed at this moment, asks me to reply.

As far as the order for sending Father L' Vercruysse back to Belgium is concerned, on the strength of what you say regarding this good Father, the Reverend Father Provincial will leave this affair entirely to the discretion of the superiors of Oregon, and gives his consent to his remaining in the missions. You tell me " that he suspects me of the blow that has struck him." He is very much mistaken. If a blow has struck him, it has certainly not emanated from me in any way. If he will just reflect and look around a little, he will not have far to go to find the guilty party. Enough on this subject. Assure Father Louis that everything was forgotten and forgiven years ago; that no bitterness against any one whomsoever ever entered my heart. There have been misunderstandings, there are discords, and many wretched little things that have had sad enough results. I have attributed all these things to the devil, jealous of the good disposition of the Indians and of the great good that was being done in the missions. Courage, dear Father, do not abandon the post that has been intrusted to you. The Good Lord will come to your aid, I hope, before long.

Our Indian missions east of the Rocky Mountains are very flourishing; everything is going well enough in the various houses of our Province. I have read the note and

[4] Extract from letter of January 21, 1851, to Father Joset in Oregon.

the Gazette that the Reverend Father Accolti sent me. I have brought the affair of the respectable Doctor McLoughlin to the attention of Senator Benton.

St. Louis University, Nov. 13, 1851.

Reverend Father HELIAS, S. J., *St. Xavier's Church, P. C.:*

Reverend and Very Dear Father in Christ.—Dear Father, since last I wrote to your Reverence I have suffered much and lost much. I lost my good companion, Father Hoeken, and was left alone like an orphan to find my way through the wilderness, surrounded by a thousand dangers. At my return I found my superior buried, in whom I lost not only a father and brother in Christ, but a faithful friend and a true and sure guide, by his good counsels and examples. The Lord be praised — both died like saints — this consoles and strengthens me in my loss.

Whilst traveling in the plains and mountains, kind Providence has watched over me. I escaped from a dangerous illness, from the attacks of wild beasts and enemies, from the smallpox and cholera. I passed through a camp where people were dying and rottening, alive, unhurt and untouched. I slept among the dying and dead for over a month, handling and attending on the cholera patients, and returned safe and sound. I had the happiness to place the holy waters of baptism on the foreheads of 1,586 children and adults, of whom many have since fallen victims of the two mentioned diseases, and are now forever happy.

Let us be friends. I will be more serious in my letters for the future, as I have perceived that they have not been taken as I meant them (in a joke); for I certainly could not and would not act against your Reverence for whom I shall ever entertain the highest esteem and respect.

Reverend and Dear Father, etc.

St. Louis University, Feb. 27, 1852.

Mr. George Thompson, *Chapel Hill, Perry Co., Ohio:*

Dear Sir.— I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th instant, in which you ask me some information concerning Oregon. As it is asked by way of advice which may decide you and eight or ten more families, as you say, to emigrate to that country, I am indeed at a loss what to say, and I must acknowledge that till now I have never taken it upon me to encourage any one to undertake the journey. Oregon, no doubt, has great advantages, several of its valleys are beautiful and rich; the grazing, even in winter, is fine and abundant; and the great discoveries in California have opened up a large market for its products. In no country are cattle easier raised, and its wheat is most beautiful. The climate may be put down as fair, if you except the rainy season, which lasts between three and four months. I must say, at the same time, that it can bear no comparison with most of our Western States, all things well considered. The richness of the lands in general, with all the other advantages connected with it, are much greater here than there.

I left Oregon in the fall of 1846, and since that time extensive emigrations to that country have taken place; so that I think by this time the best and most suitable spots must have been taken up.

Besides, the great difficulty is to get there, for the road is long and dangerous. Last summer I paid a visit to the different Indian nations as far as the Rocky Mountains, and returned to the States by the Oregon route, which I struck in the neighborhood of Independence Rock, about 200 miles above Fort Laramie. The scene we witnessed on this road presented indeed a melancholy proof of the uncertainty which attends our highest prospects in life. The bleached bones of animals everywhere strewed along the track, the hastily erected mound, beneath which lie the remains of some departed friend or relative, with an occasional tribute to his memory roughly inscribed on a board or headstone, and hundreds of graves left without this affectionate token of remembrance, furnished abundant evidence of the unsparing hand with which death has thinned their ranks. The numerous shattered fragments of the vehicles, provision, tools, etc., intended to be taken across these wild plains, tell us another tale of reckless boldness with which many entered upon this hazardous enterprise. It is rashness to undertake this long trip except with very good animals, with very strong vehicles and with a good supply of light provisions, such as tea, coffee, sugar, rice, dried apples, peaches, flour and peas or beans.

I remain, Dear Sir, etc.

St. Louis University, March 12, 1852.

[5]*Reverend Father Provincial, Holland:*

P. C.:

Very Reverend Father.— Perhaps your Reverence may already have received the letter of the Reverend Father Provincial, of Missouri, in which he announces to you his intention, in concert with all his consulters, of sending me to Europe as Procurator of the Vice Province of Missouri, and of the Indian missions; and by which he desired beforehand to consult your Reverence. The plan is one that Reverend Father Elet had formed in the time of his provincialate, and seems to have already received the approbation of his Paternity.

In so far as this plan regards me, I will speak openly to you. I have nothing whatever to do with their choice, nor with the adoption of the plan. I affirm, nevertheless, that I am ready to execute in all things the will of my superiors. I will even admit to you, that in my secret soul, and after mature reflection and much prayer, I desire that the plan

[5] From the French.

should be accomplished; and for the sole reason that I would be glad to be able to spend the few years that remain to me, should the Lord grant me any, in the strict observance and practice of all our holy rules, and in perfect submission to the orders of my superiors. I feel the need of it, after having passed so many years in these remote American missions. The beautiful death of the Reverend Hoeken, whom the Lord has seen fit to recompense on the field of battle, and that of the worthy Father Elet, who has been to me for so many years not only a brother in Christ, but also a guide by his good counsels and his example, make me sincerely desire this.

I venture to assure you in advance, Very Reverend Father, that I shall give you entire satisfaction in everything, and if the Reverend Father Provincial's request is granted by your Reverence, I shall personally be under the greatest obligations to you. To live as a good religious, submissive and obedient to my superiors, and if occasion should present, to be still useful to America, always subject to the good pleasure of my superiors, is, before God, my sole desire.

Believe, me, etc.

St. Louis University, May 1, 1852.

Right Reverend Bishop Van De Velde, *at the Council, Baltimore:*

P. C.:

Right Reverend and Most Dear Father in Christ.—I received your kind and most welcome favor of the 22d instant. It relieved my mind, which had been uneasy by not receiving an answer to three letters, pretty much about the same subject, which I had the honor of writing to you.

* * * * * * * *

When you were my superior, you frequently corrected me for being too easily affected and dejected when things were said against me, to which I must plead guilty. Something of the kind has occurred again, and from headquarters, which has brought me low, indeed — the more so, as I have the full conviction in my heart that the charges against me are untrue, false and unjust, and bring along great evil in their consequences — the neglect, in a great measure, of Indians, for whom I would have gladly sacrificed the remainder of my days. I stand accused of the following: First. That my letters have done a great deal of harm in America. Second. That my letters are only imagination and poetry, false and untrue. Third. That I have lost the missions by over-liberality to the Indians, and by promises to them which the Fathers have been unable to fulfill.

I pardon, from my heart, the men who have made these false accusations. The letters written from Oregon for several years in succession by the Fathers on the good dispositions of the Indians, after I had left the missions, are alone sufficient to cover the calumniators with shame and confusion. Many of these letters I have sent to Rome in the very handwriting of those Fathers, and culled [others] from the newspapers as they had been published; but to all of which no answer has been returned. All my letters have been written by special requests of my superiors, chiefly Very Reverend Father-General. I declare to have written them all with uprightness and sincerity, and that I have never exaggerated, at least not willfully, in speaking of the dispositions of the Indians, and of the good which was done in their midst; and of this in particular, most of the Fathers have said, spoken and written more highly than I ever did (Fathers Point, Joset, Mengarini, Ravalli, Hoeken, Accolti, De Vos, Nobili, etc.). I have many of their letters still in my possession. *They have written the truth and so have I.* Even as late as the 1st of November, 1851, Reverend Father Joset writes to me as follows; and his letter was published in the *Shepherd of the Valley:* "You will learn with pleasure that the Pend d'Oreilles, the Cœur d'Alènes, the Kettle Falls Indians and the tribes of the lakes of the

Columbia river are giving the greatest satisfaction and consolation to their missionaries, and I may say, have never behaved better," etc., etc. I could fill sheets of paper with extracts of the letters of the Fathers of Oregon, filled with praise of the Indians, and that for years after I had left them.

In the spring of 1851 the Flathead mission was abandoned. The why and the how I could, I think, pretty easily guess at. I left it in a flourishing condition in 1846; the testimonials and letters of Fathers Joset, Mengarini, Ravalli, Point, and Accolti, bear testimony to my assertion. It is abandoned five years later and I am accused of being the cause of this "by my liberalities and promises to the Indians, which they have been unable to sustain." Liberal in what? Promises of what? I am at a loss to imagine.

Let the above suffice. I have given you this little statement, because I have no doubt that Very Reverend Father-General, for whom I have always had the highest esteem, respect and veneration, will allude to some of these points, and I ardently wished to acquaint you with it, "lest blame be imputed, where no blame is due." (The writing I took this from has wonderfully pleased us. Thank you.)

There is some appearance of my being sent to Europe as Procurator of the Vice Province. Should this come to pass, it will be a struggle for me to leave America, with many dear brethren and many happy recollections. The thought of being still useful to it, though at a distance, encourages me in the strict practice and observance of our holy rules, and in a perfect submission to the orders of my superiors. I feel and am sensible of the necessity of this, after having passed so many years in the wild and distant missions of America, in which all my thoughts and endeavors have, as it were, so long been centred, in the midst of great struggles and contradictions. The examples of the beautiful death of Father Hoeken, whom the Lord has deigned to crown on the very battle-field; and the death of our worthy Father Elet, so edifying to all, have made a deep impression upon my mind, by which I hope I shall profit till the end. May God's will be done.

Remember me, etc.,

St. Louis University, May —, 1852.

EDWIN T. DENIG, Esq., *Fort Union*:

Dear Sir and Friend.— Your welcome letter of the 28th of January reached me in due time. I was glad to learn of the safe arrival of our good friend Mr. Culbertson at Fort Union, but how the great pioneer could be found manœuvring some time between the waters of the Missouri and those of the Columbia, I am truly astonished at. I hope he has kept a journal, and I would be glad to have a peep at it, as his mishap would considerably improve my great map.* Tell him that I read with the greatest pleasure and profit to myself the ably written journal of the expedition to the Upper Missouri of his worthy brother Thaddeus, in which he so frequently and honorably refers to so many names that I shall always remember with a grateful heart.

I communicated your favor to Colonel D. D. Mitchell, who read with delight your statement of the actual dispositions of the Indians. Your remarks are certainly just and true. The colonel is well convinced of it and he has repeatedly urged upon the Government the ratification of the treaty. What a pity that so little is known in high quarters of the nature and character of the Indians — they would not be so slow in their decisions. It is hoped, however, that the treaty will ere long be ratified by Congress and carried out in full without further delay. I thank you likewise for the view you kindly give me of the future formation of missions on the upper Missouri, and for your good feelings toward me, my brethren and the religion we profess. I am truly grateful to learn that even the Crazy Bear and his people have commenced appreciating the value of such establishments. You are well convinced that nothing but the propagation of the principles of the Christian religion, and motives of charity toward the aborigines could induce us to embark in such undertakings. Dear Sir, I have not lost sight of this object, and I am allowed to state that we have it in contemplation, and that great hopes are entertained that before long a mission will be established within, or in the vicinity of, your district. Should such a task devolve on me I shall certainly look out for a spot sufficiently convenient [for us] to meet occasionally, where we might quietly and pleasantly pass a few hours in friendly discourse on religious topics, on politics, on socialism, red republicanism and Kossuth, and the manners and customs of the Indians. Let me here express my gratitude for the manuscript you have had the great kindness to prepare for me, and which I shall be most glad to receive and to peruse.

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* Literally copied, but exact meaning of last two sentences is obscure.

I see you are still perusing Mochler's *Symbolism* and you look upon him as an able writer. The book is calculated to be the instrument of much good, particularly at the time like the present when men's minds are turned to the consideration of religious controversy with an earnestness and activity unexampled at any other period. Cardinal Wiseman, whose very name is an authority, calls it "the most profound work upon the Philosophy of Divinity which our time has produced."

I send you by the steamer another book, in reading which I will venture to say that you will think some of your leisure hours well spent, so various are its topics, so rich are its views and suggestions. Balmes is a Spanish priest, but one of the best known and most influential of the contemporary political and philosophical writers of his country, enjoying a high European reputation, and deservedly ranking among the first authors of our times. He is at once learned and philosophical, profound and popular, a man of the nineteenth century and a rigidly orthodox pious Catholic. You will pronounce him, I know, not the worse for it.

I have not forgotten the locust sprouts and shall do my best to send them by the steamer. Assuredly I shall not forget a dozen of H. S. [?], and I hope they will not be "swooped," as the previous have been, but will be enjoyed by yourself and friends.

St. Louis University, Sept. 27, 1852.

Reverend P. J. Verhaegen, S. J., *St. Charles:*

Reverend and Dear Father.—I will thank your Reverence for an immediate answer to the following. Captain Bridger,[7] an old Rocky Mountain friend of mine, has sent his two children (half-breeds) to the States to be educated. One is a girl about seven years old; the boy is a little over eight. They have never been baptized, at least I think so, and shall inquire on the subject. He has left means with Colonel Robert Campbell for their education and clothing. Inquire of Madame Hamilton whether she will admit the little girl? and at what price? Will Madame Barada admit the boy as a boarder, pay for his schooling at your school, and for how much a year? Please answer without delay. I am afraid Protestants will try to get them; the sooner they are away from here the better.

Pray for me, etc.,

[7] James Bridger was one of the most widely known of the pioneers of the fur trade and emigration periods. He was born in Richmond, Va., March 17, 1804, and died in Westport, Mo. (now a part of Kansas City), July 17, 1881. He first went to the Indian country in 1822 as a member of the Ashley Expedition of that year. He visited Great Salt lake in the winter of 1824-1825 and, so far as now known, was the first white man to see that body of water. He was a member of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, the founder of the celebrated Fort Bridger, a trusted guide in many Government and private expeditions, and altogether one of the most quaint and romantic, yet important, characters in the early history of the West.

St. Louis University, Sept. 30, 1852.

Mr. [Robert] Meldrum, *Upper Missouri:*

Dear Sir.— I received your kind favor of the 29th of last July. I had received previously the garnished buffalo robe, the elk-horn bow and the dressed sheep skin, which you had the kindness to send me, and for which I return to you my sincere thanks. I learned to-day that Mr. Culbertson had arrived in St. Louis and would leave the city immediately. I could not let him depart without sending him these few lines. The news you gave me about the Crows and their happy and religious dispositions has greatly pleased me. Please remember me to them; assure them that they are not forgotten in my heart and mind and that I long to visit them once more. When this shall be I am not able, at present, to tell you. Should I receive good news in the course of this fall or winter concerning an establishment or a visit among the Crows, I will let you know in due time. Meanwhile, endeavor to continue, as far as lies in your power, to keep up a good religious spirit among them, which will greatly lead to their advantage and welfare.

Believe me to be, etc.,

St. Louis University, April 1, 1853.

Mr. J. Bridger, *Fort Bridger and Vasques:*

Dear Friend.— Our good friend, Colonel R. Campbell, acquainted me yesterday that a departure for the mountains was about to take place and I avail myself of this opportunity of writing a few lines to you. A few days ago I had the pleasure of paying a visit to your children who reside at present in St. Charles. They appeared to be well pleased and are certainly well taken care of. Felix frequents our school and is making progress. His sister lives in the Academy and under the immediate care of the

Ladies of that well-conducted establishment, who have every regard for her that good Mothers could have for their own children. Both have been somewhat sickly during the winter, but are now doing well. You may rest assured that all shall be done to make them comfortable and happy.

You have promised me a letter with regard to the Flatheads, and I have anxiously expected it during the whole course of last year. Should you see them remember me to them and assure them that I daily address my prayers to the Lord for their welfare and happiness; but to attain this end they must remain faithful to God and not listen to bad counsel, and to ill-disposed persons. It would be for me the height of happiness to learn that they still cherish the idea of seeing a Black-gown in their midst, and were this the case, of which I wish to be informed, I would do all I can to see this their desire accomplished. I send you by this occasion a couple of pistols and a knife, as a present to my dear friend Insula, whose remembrance I shall always cherish.

Remember me to all, etc.

April 22, 1853.

Mes Très Chères SYLVIE ELMIRE et ROSALIE:[8]

Exilement, even when it is voluntary, or when, rather, it is imposed by conscience or religion, cannot destroy in a man's heart the sweet sentiments there implanted by kinship or love of country. Hence the vacancy that I feel within me, from not having received for so long a time any of your letters, always so good and interesting and so consoling to your American exile. Still, I am not in a position to complain; if reproaches were in order, it is, I presume, upon me that they ought to fall. So if you should require a big "meâ culpâ" from me, a resounding one shall fall upon my broad breast. I will admit, in fact, that I ought long ago to have sent you a full account of my very long journeys in our great American deserts, because I made you that positive promise long ago.[9] I would have liked nothing so well as to have let you follow, step by step, without danger to yourselves, my wanderings as missionary, traveler and observer. You would have seen many lands, traversed many deserts, sailed upon many rivers. Exposed to the uncertainties of the weather and to the rigors of the climate, you would have spent many somewhat chilly nights under the open sky or the tent of the savage, victims to a thousand devouring insects. Lovely nature, sublime nature, terrible nature — the plains, the valleys, the hills, the mountains hiding their snowy summits among clouds — nature in all her forms would have roused in you a thousand reflections, each more philosophic than the rest. And then the forlornness, the misery, the brutalization of the poor natives of our country, would have moved your tender hearts and lifted them to heaven in prayer.— Yes, you can imagine what a comfort it would have been to me, to talk to you about these things so dear to my heart. The best part of my existence has been devoted to the savages, these sorry waifs of our race. I have in days gone by had the happiness to dry a few tears among them; to bind up some wounds, those of the soul in especial; to guide them toward the only true destiny of mankind. My hair has whitened at it, and my vigorous health has received some small shocks.

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[8] From the French.

But I am straying; I meant to tell you how much I would have liked to keep my promise; how much my friendly feeling for you and my good will to my poor Indians inclined me that way. But for the last few years I have been worked to death, and have had frequent and long journeys to make. I have put off the fulfillment of my promise from week to week and from month to month, until to-day I find myself still your debtor. I know that you will lay my apparent neglect of you to these causes, and that you have never doubted my good will. My hair may turn gray, my sight become dim, my strength fail me, but I can say in all truthfulness that my affection for you, my dear Sylvie, Elmire and Rosalie, remains to me in its full vigor. Every day at the altar I implore the aid and blessing of heaven upon you and all the family. The only thing that I expect from you in return, is that I may always hold the same place in your affections, and that sometimes you will address to God your good prayers for your Uncle Pierre and for the conversion of his poor savages.

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[9] Another of the numerous examples in Father De Smet's writings of his fancy for excessive repetition of certain words.

You must not despair, though I am not able even yet to pay the debt that I owe you. Who knows if I may not repay you the whole with interest, one of these fine days, and in currency more available than paper money. There is, however, my good nieces, nothing to prevent your scolding me as roundly as you please. I would even consider this a mark of affection on your part, as showing how much you think of my poor correspondence. And then let us leave it to time, or rather to Providence, to arrange everything for the best and for the greatest satisfaction of us all.

I hope Papa will have received my letter of the 24th of March. Please remember me, and say a thousand things from me, to your dear parents, to your Uncle François, to Charles, Paul, Clémence and all the family at Termonde and Antwerp.

And now I have only to wish you every one increased prosperity, hoping that the Lord will grant the ardent vows that I form to that end.

Your devoted, etc.

St. Louis University, Feb. 4, 1854.

W. S. ROSECRANS:

Dear Sir.— I received your kind favor of the 21st ultimo, a few days ago. In answer to your letter, I would counsel you to open a correspondence with Mr. Philip Van der Maelen, Founder and Director of *L'Etablissement Geographique de Bruxelles.* He is known all over Belgium and Holland and I may add, Europe in general. Should he accept of your proposal, you will find in him a most responsible business correspondent and at the same time a most worthy Catholic. Should his occupations prevent him from accepting your proposals, he will, no doubt, indicate a person in every way competent and willing to open a correspondence, and to whose care you might safely intrust the applications you may have to make for the procuring Belgian *Brevets d'Invention* for American clients.

As I have the honor of being well acquainted with Mr. Van der Maelen, and visited several times his great and interesting establishment, it may perhaps be good to tell him in your letter the circumstance of my recommending him. Anything in the way of new inventions and of natural curiosities interest him exceedingly and I am inclined to think your proposal will be gladly accepted, and that your acquaintance will be highly appreciated by him.

I have the honor to be, etc.

St. Louis University, March 11, 1854.

Reverend Father Verhaegen, S. J.:

Reverend and Dear Father.— We are all enjoying good health at the University and Father O'Loghlin has recovered. I spoke to Mr. Campbell the other day about little Rocky Mountain Felix and told him that I had written to your Reverence to procure the necessary clothes for the child, for which he thanked me and said it was all right. His father will probably soon arrive in St. Louis and may again proceed to the mountains, taking his two children along with him. All expenses incurred for Felix, up to the day of his departure, Mr. Campbell has promised shall be settled, but, in the doubt that he may perhaps not be left in

St. Charles, does not like to pay in advance. This much was said to Mrs. Barada, but has not been well understood by her. You may assure her that all is right.

I hope Major Bridger will find his children in good health at his arrival in St. Charles. He has spent upward of thirty years among the Indians and is one of the truest specimens of a real trapper and Rocky Mountain man. He has been always very kind to us, and as he has much influence among the various tribes of the Far West he may still continue to exercise it in our favor — I hope he will call on your Reverence.

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Remember me, etc.

One of Father De Smet's Relaxations.

St. Louis Spiritual Rolling-mill,[10] April 12, 1854.

Reverend Father Horstmann, S. J.,
P. C.:

Reverend and Dear Father and Friend of the Roll-offs.— Your two last short rolls put me into a rolling humor once more, for the particular benefit of all the reverend rollers of St. Xavier College, who rolled out, as you say, a rolling laugh and a rolling shout, at my first endeavor at rolling off an epistle. Our old folks, however, know full well that I was not a bad hand at a log-rolling party in our first days of fervor at St. Stanislaus — indeed we rolled thousands of logs out of sight to make the rolling land look decent all around. How proud Father Rolloff must be of his rolling name — to see it roll in and roll out, roll up and roll down, in a perpetual rolling motion!

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[10] A new priest, named Roeloff, had it seems arrived at St. Xavier's. Father Di Maria and his mare, and her colt that bit off Father Truyens' thumb, and his law-suit with a St. Louis dentist over a set of teeth, were the theme of a good deal of good-humored badinage about this time.

Now let us roll for a moment into business. Your twenty-nine intentions of the 24th ulto and the seventeen of the 1st instant, I have all rolled out to good quarters. The old corn-crackers, I think, do well to roll in on your rolling-mill, to obtain pious rolls — Father Di Maria paid dear enough for his two new sets of corn-crackers [false teeth]. He wants silver rollers to keep them sharp and to keep his old mare in corn and in good humor, lest she, too, like her angry little one, cracks off another Father's thumb, and like Truyens would make him feel the loss of the thing. Roll out of course a part of your kind intentions to the old corn-crackers, it will keep them in a good rolling, corn-cracking mood.

We rolled everything in good order in our Bishop's room, for we expect the second High Priest of the Upper Corn-crackers will roll in on us soon after Easter. The second cook is already engaged in baking hot rolls for the occasion — his friends know what he is rolling after and will be, no doubt, prepared to furnish him a goodly roll of shin-plasters, to enable his Lordship to erect the corn-cracking cathedral of Covington.

Roll on with your accounts with your usual prudence; they will roll into a happy conclusion at last, and St. Xavier, I trust, will roll and roll smoothly forward for many a happy year to come. The silver rolls alone ought not altogether to absorb our thoughts. Robinson-like, you must keep them rolling in and out, for to be rolled about is their nature.— Your church is your chief rolling mill and a great deal of good rolls out of it. Upward of 30,000 sinful rolls yearly, of which many are generals, are there unrolled, and the dark rolling consciences, being freed and made clean, roll toward home in peace and joy. And again, how many are there in the Queen City, who are yearly rolled into a happy eternity by Father Rolloff & Co., whose names find a place on the celestial roll. Roll on patiently and cautiously with your temporal rolls, so that the spiritual rolling-mill may be kept in a constant rolling operation.

The clock has struck half-past eleven, and my eyes begin to roll — before I roll under my blanket and roll my head in my pillow, allow me, Dear Father, to beg you to roll forth another good prayer for me, and obtain in my behalf, from each Father and Brother, a short pious roll. I rolled out of my retreat a few days ago with a store of good and resolute rolls — I wish to make them roll faithfully as long as my breath is rolling within me, and when this rolls off, may I roll out of this world as a true son of St. Ignatius.— Roll out my best respects to Father Rolloff & Co.— Most respectfully rolling,

Reverend and Dear Father,
Your devoted roller in Xst,
P. J. De SMET, S. J.

[About May 25, 1854.]

E. T. Denig, *Mouth of the Yellowstone:*

My Dear Friend.— I received your very kind letter of the 20th of December, and I sincerely thank you for your kind remembrance of me. I shall anxiously be on the lookout for the return of the boat and hope I shall be favored again with one of your interesting epistles, which I consider as most agreeable treats and which I always peruse with the greatest pleasure and with great advantage to myself. Nothing, dear friend, could come nearer to my heart than to be again employed in the midst of the Indians and to spend all my time for their spiritual and temporal welfare. The several years I passed among them I call the happiest of my life and nothing shall efface from my memory the many tokens of sincere affection and kindness I have received from this benighted people, and their great willingness to listen to my instructions and to put them into practice. I remember to have told you that a good and faithful Jesuit is a soldier of Jesus Christ. He has his General and his other subordinate and immediate superiors, who employ him in the service of the Lord wherever his services may be best required, for his own good and to prepare him for a happy eternity, and for the better promoting of his neighbor's welfare. My station at present is in St. Louis, and I am satisfied and pleased. My next may be among the poor aborigines again, and I should rejoice indeed if it came within the limits of your jurisdiction; and that for several reasons. You know the Indian nature and character so well; you truly sympathize with them in their forlorn situation and sincerely wish to promote their happiness and welfare. I for my part value your friendship highly and would assuredly profit by your advice in furthering the great end, the conversion and civilization of the Indian tribes.

Allow me to make a request of you, which will, I think, advance the object we have so often spoken of, and which you take so much to heart, the establishment of a Catholic mission on the upper Missouri. I would ask of you to address a statement and request to that effect to the Right Reverend Bishop Miège, residing at present among the Potawatomies in the Nebraska Territory, stating the necessity and advantages to be derived from such an establishment, the actual disposition of the Indian nations, and particularly the great desire of the chiefs to promote it. Send it to me and I will forward it myself to the Bishop. I doubt not he will give it all due consideration and attention and use every exertion to carry it into effect.

Last year I entertained some hope of going to the upper country again to accompany the Right Reverend Bishop in his first contemplated visit to the upper Indian tribes. We were both called to Europe on business, which alone broke up our plans. This year the agitation of the Nebraska question does not permit him to leave the Potawatomi and Osage Missions, for the whole of that beautiful region will soon be taken possession of by white settlers. Rest assured, and you may tell the Indians so, that the idea of establishing missions among them has not been abandoned by their friends the Black-robes, but has only been postponed, and that perhaps for only a short period.

You may not forget to tell Crazy Bear, the Three Bears and others, that the old Black-robe thinks frequently of them, and begs daily of the Great Spirit to bless and protect all his Indian friends, to make them happy here in this world and grant them the favor of knowing him, of loving him, of serving him in this world, to be made happy with him in heaven for all eternity. I will always take great interest in their welfare.

I give you no news either from the States, or from Europe. I could only take it from the papers, which of course you will read, and with eagerness, I dare say, for the Eastern war will procure us very thrilling and interesting subjects.

Major Vaughan will bring you a great deal of news. I had the pleasure and happiness of seeing him several times in St. Louis. You will not lose, I hope, by your kindness toward him. The razors I now send you by the present occasion will, if anything, I think shave cleaner [than those sent before][11] and assist you for many long years to come as you very beautifully express it in your letter, "to shave and lather the inner man occasionally." We cannot often enough think of this and we ought to prepare for the life to come.

I beg of you as a great favor, not to forget to write to me as often as you conveniently can — If you have an elk-horn bow to send with a quiver of arrows, I would greatly thank you for it. I promised to procure one to a friend in Europe.

I remain with great respect, Dear Friend,

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[11] Presumably religious instruction of some sort. Some eighteen months before Father De Smet had sent him two razors and a penknife.

St. Louis University, August 23, 1855.

Mr. E. T. Denig:

My Dear Friend.— I must write in a great hurry and be short. Mr. Rolette, our good friend, just arrived from Canada and tells me he must be off to-day for St. Paul and Red river, in order to meet you in due time and to continue together your trip to Fort Union. I cannot see him start without giving him a few lines for you. He will give you verbally the contents of our long conversation and all the news concerning me. I rejoiced greatly indeed in meeting with him, the more so as he lives with you under the same roof and in a country so dear to my heart. I need not tell you how sadly I was grieved that while you were in St. Louis circumstances prevented me from seeing you and communicating with you. I can assure you, it has been a serious trial and sacrifice on my part. I hope my friends here will have explained well to you the particular situation in which I found myself, for according to our rules and customs, the religious exercises once begun, cannot be interrupted. Mr. Rolette understands these matters well and will give you further satisfaction on the subject. I can assure you that in these religious exercises I have not forgotten you and daily have I remembered you in a most particular manner in my poor prayers to God. O dear friend, as long as I live I will not cease to offer a prayer for you to the Lord that he may grant you his choicest blessings and favors. I was happy to learn that during my absence you still consented to be married by Reverend Father Daeman and that your children have been baptized.

At the end of my religious exercises, on the 19th inst., I proceeded immediately to St. Louis and to the Virginia Hotel, in the expectation of still finding you. To my great sorrow I arrived about two hours after your departure and had to forego the pleasure and happiness of embracing you. I hope I shall see you perhaps in the course of the next year. Assure the Indians that the Black-robe has not forgotten them and try your best to prepare the way.

Mr. Rolette will present you some books in my name, which I know you will peruse with pleasure in your leisure moments.

You will present my best respects to Mr. Culbertson and his good and kind family, to Mr. Meldrum and all other good friends and acquaintances.

I remain, etc.

St. Louis University, June 13, 1856.

E. T. Denig, Esq.:

Most Dear Sir and Friend.— Major Culbertson, I hope, will already have reached Fort Union in good health and safety. I arrived in St. Louis only in time to shake hands with him and to wish him a happy and prosperous journey. He had the kindness to take charge of a short letter to you, which I scribbled out in a great hurry, to give you some token of life and of my continued esteem and attachment. I shall never forget the unbounded kindness and charity I have received from our good and great friend, the major. He has most liberally taken under his care all the little effects I have been able to collect to assist poor Father Hoeken and brethren in their missionary labors among the Flatheads and Rocky Mountain Indians. Please be my interpreter in returning him again my most sincere thanks.

If time had allowed me I would have sent you a little remembrance by the major. I rejoice for the present opportunity. Mr. Mackenzie tells me he will see you and I avail myself of the occasion to present you a few books from me. I know you will read them with pleasure in your leisure hours. I feel proud indeed for my country to have so able a man as Hendrick Consciens. He is one of those men whom God sends only at distant intervals and for the general elevation and glory of the human race. His tales are intensely national, they are characteristic to a T and altogether Belgian; but you will find them at the same time universal, appealing to what is deepest, truest, and purest in the universal human heart. He is doing more for Belgium than Scott did for Scotland. Brownson says of him, "that no competent judge can deny the author a much higher order of genius than was possessed by the Wizard of the North." I have added Louis Napoleon's life. I have no doubt you will read it with pleasure. The author overrates perhaps a little too much his hero. It is certainly well written, and full of interest and valuable information, and I think you will find it so.

As I am no politician and never meddle in such affairs you cannot expect any news from me on the subject. For some time to come the papers will afford a great deal of interest and these, no doubt, you will occasionally receive. I hope, dear friend, that you will continue to favor me with your interesting letters; they are always a treat to me and most welcome. I would also feel most grateful for an occasional Indian legend, or something on their manners and customs. My kindest regards to Mr. Rolette. The Reverend Fathers Murphy and Damen wish to be remembered to you. Remember me also to your kind family and all other friends and acquaintances at Fort Union; likewise to Crazy Bear and the other chiefs I may happen to have seen in the country.

Most respectfully, etc.

St. Louis University, August 22, 1856.

Dear Friend:[12]

I received your kind favor of the 12th ultimo and thank you most sincerely for your kind remembrance of me. I see with great pleasure in your letter that you take the greatest interest in the spiritual welfare of the poor benighted Indians. Continue to encourage them. I have little doubt that in the course of next spring either myself or some other Black-robe of my friends will leave St. Louis for the Upper Missouri with the intention to carry out the long-projected missions. By the first occasion that will present itself I will send you some good controversial works, which will enable you to resist and confound all the enemies and opposers of the old and true Church of Christ. All their objections are only quibbles, calumnies or lies and are easily refuted. I am sorry indeed to be so much occupied at present; I would like to write to you a long letter. In a few days I will leave for Europe and may be back in St. Louis about New Year.

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[12] Letter to Joseph Rolette at Fort Union.

I hope my friend, Mr. Denig, will have received the letters and books I forwarded to him by Mr. Mackenzie before he left for Red river. Please remember me most kindly to him in your letters and let me know his address, so that I may communicate with him directly. Remember me to all kind friends at Fort Union and in the upper country. Assure the good Indians who know me that I do not forget them and pray often for their welfare.

Rest assured, etc.

St. Louis University, July 1, 1857.

Sirs:

I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 9th of April ultimo. My absence in Europe, until recently, will account for the lateness of this acknowledgment. In answer to your request for information on the important question proposed, I refer you to the map which I constructed at the request of Colonel D. D. Mitchell in 1851, which was sent to Washington together with the treaty. What reliance you can place on that map, you can best judge from a simple statement of facts. During the ten years I spent in the Indian country I occupied myself occasionally in drawing maps of the countries through which I passed. I availed myself of the best information I could obtain from trappers and intelligent Indians who were well acquainted with the mountain passes and the course of the rivers. Not having had instruments with me, the maps were necessarily only an approximation to the true position. When I was at the council ground in 1851, on the Platte river, at the mouth of the Horse creek, I was requested by Colonel Mitchell to make a map of the whole Indian country, relating particularly to the upper Missouri, the waters of the upper Platte, east of the Rocky Mountains and of the headwaters of the Columbia and its tributaries west of these mountains. In compliance with this request I drew up the map from scraps then in my possession. The map, so prepared, was seemingly approved and made use of by the gentlemen assembled in council, and subsequently sent on to Washington together with the treaty then made with the Indians. In my humble opinion, therefore, it can be of very little service for your purposes, in which accuracy of instrumental measurement and observation seems to be absolutely necessary. Again, since that time, several scientific exploring parties, sent out by Government, have given the most reliable and accurate information on these subjects.

Should it ever be in my power to afford you any useful information, I not only deem it a duty but also an honorable as well as an agreeable task.

Most respectfully, etc.

Honorable Messrs. ALBERT and CAMPBELL,
Department of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.

St. Louis University, Jan. 13, 1858.

Mr. E. T. DENIG, *Red River of the North, British America:*

Dear Friend.—It is useless to make an apology; I must plead guilty, for I should have written to you long ago.

Surely I have not *suspended* like the banks. I shall be more prompt, however, for the future.

Ever since my return from Europe, where I spent about eight months among my relations and friends, not a week has passed but I determined writing to you; and now an excursion and then some urgent business made me postpone this truly dear obligation and pleasure. Your kind favor of the 1st of December ultimo reached me yesterday. I read it with the greatest pleasure and feel truly grateful for your kind and affectionate remembrance of me which I sincerely reciprocate in your regard. I rejoice greatly at your success and in the welfare of your family. With the first opportunity I will send you some fine pictures for your children, at the Sisters' Academy. You could not have placed them in better hands and I am sure they will be a pleasure and consolation to you. I will add some books for yourself and you may soon expect a periodical. I shall look out for a good and interesting one.

After having read your letter I visited Colonel R. Campbell in regard to your request. I think you will have no trouble to come to a good understanding with him in obtaining the goods you may stand in need of. Mr. Campbell stands among the highest in St. Louis and is not surpassed for probity and honesty. He read to me the letter he wrote you. Should Mr. Morgan come to St. Louis, please tell him, he must absolutely come to see me.

You receive the newspapers and so you are up in all that is stirring and going on in this Great Republic. Charles Primeau was here for some time with his wife and children. He followed your example and was lawfully married to his wife. I baptized her with all her children. I likewise baptized the three children of Bouis and two of Alfred Beeman. All have been well provided for and placed in various religious establishments.

If I can possibly do it I will take another trip to the plains and visit the various Indian tribes early in the spring. I received invitations from various quarters to that effect.

Most willingly would I spend the remainder of my days in endeavoring to promote the welfare of the poor abandoned savages. I have been strongly invited to commence an establishment either among the Crows or Blackfeet; this would greatly strengthen our missions among the Flatheads and Pend d'Oreilles.

About a fortnight ago I received a visit from Major Culbertson; he is now settled with his family near Peoria, Illinois; he requested me to visit him and to remain some days with him, to enable him to arrange matters and things. I think he intends to marry his wife and to have her instructed and baptized. I intend to visit him soon. He placed his daughters at a convent in St. Louis.

I beg you, as a favor, dear friend, to write to me as often as your leisure will permit. I promise you I shall be more punctual in answering all your letters. I wish you a most happy New Year with all the benedictions from above. I shall ever remember you and your family in my poor prayers.

Your humble servant, etc.

St. Louis University, March 31, 1858.

Lieutenant JOHN MULLAN, *U. S. Army:*

Dear Sir.— I just received your kind and interesting letter of the 26th instant. I thank you most gratefully for the great interest you have always taken in the welfare of our missions in the mountains, and particularly for all you have lately effected for them on your late visit to Washington. Not a fortnight ago I received a number of letters from Fathers Hoeken, Gazzoli, Menetrey, Joset, Vercruysse and Ravalli, in several of which you were most highly spoken of. They keep your name in benediction. The Fathers and the Indians will hail your return amongst them and your visit, I am sure, will be of the greatest advantage to all. The missions of Father Hoeken, near the Flathead lake, of Father Joset among the Cœur d'Alènes, of Father Ravalli at the Kettle Falls, were getting on slowly but prosperously. They do all they can for the welfare of their poor people. Father Menetrey gave several missions or visits among the Flatheads and brought them all round again with regard to the holy practice of religion.

In a temporal way the Fathers are sorely pinched and they sent me long lists of objects that are much needed. I am sorry that our private means in St. Louis, owing to the hard times, are in a condition that we are unable to relieve them fully. Two thousand dollars would hardly buy what they call for. I shall, however, do what I can to come to their assistance, and the little I shall be able to collect I will forward by the boats of the American Fur Company. I will avail myself of your kind offer and forward all mail matter for the mountains to Governor Stevens in Washington. I will probably accompany the boats as far as the Yellowstone river and pay a visit to the Indians in the plains, the Blackfeet, Crows, Assiniboins, Sioux, etc. I wish you, Dear Sir, a most happy and prosperous journey. I shall daily pray for you at the holy altar during mass. Please present my best respects to all the fathers and brethren you may meet with in your long journey.

Most respectfully, etc.,

St. Louis University, Oct. 7, 1859.

Reverend Father Congiato, S. J., *Superior of the R. M. Missions:*

Reverend and Dear Father:

I promised your Reverence a letter upon my arrival in St. Louis — here it is. I avail myself of this first opportunity to renew my sincere and grateful thanks to your Reverence for your exceeding great kindness in my regard, as likewise to all the fathers and brethren in the Rocky Mountain missions. It will remain a source of consolation to me, Dear Father, to have been allowed once more to revisit those distant missions. Continue to be their promotor and protector. I shall do all in my power to help and assist you in your arduous task. Write frequently and let me know how and in what I can be particularly of service.

Did you find a suitable place among the Blackfeet? What is your final resolution with regard to the establishment of a mission among the tribes? Please send me your notice on Reverend Father De Vos, according to promise, together with your other writings on the missions. I will try my best to make good use of them for the furtherance of the good cause.

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I shook hands with your Reverence on the 3d of August. I reached St. Louis on the 23d of September. My long trip has been favorable, happy and pleasant. I had a good set of young men to manage the skiff for upwards of 2,300 miles, when we met with a steamer on its way down. We found plenty of game, which served us as a relief and recreation both to body and mind. I met with thousands of Indians — Assiniboins, Minnetarees or Gros-ventres of the Missouri, Mandans, Crows, Aricaras, Sioux, Poncas, etc. Everywhere I was received with the greatest kindness and affection by these poor, unhappy and long-abandoned tribes, still longing to hear and know the word of God, and, at every distant chance they get, listening with the utmost attention. I had the great consolation to regenerate hundreds of their little children in the holy waters of baptism. I may later, when time will allow me, give your Reverence the little details and incidents and my dealings with the various Indians of this my last and long trip.

Dear Father, I recommend myself, etc.,

St. Louis University, Oct. 23, 1859.

R. P. Miège, S. J., *St. Stanislas:*

Dear Father in Christ.— I learned with grief that my friend and brother in Christ, Bishop Miège, had become bilious. Without a minute's delay I applied to the great Doctor El Sol, renowned all over the world, who commissioned his agent, Jose Cresencio Borges, to send by me to my friend a box of most exquisite pills, with the following directions: These pills are not to be swallowed or chewed. One end is to be placed between the lips and the teeth; the patient must draw in his breath slowly; blow it out again majestically; he must sit in his room in the rays of the sun, and admire whilst he is puffing the ascending curling clouds, till the whole pill has melted to his very lips. A strict attendance to these prescriptions will have a most salutary effect on the patient and he will soon be rid of his bile.

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Believe me to be with profound respect and esteem, Dear Father in Christ, etc.,

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Another Relaxation.

St. Louis University, Nov. 21, 1861.

Reverend Father De Coen:
P. C.

Reverend Dear Father.— I received your kind favor of the 12th instant. I bought Wooster's 8vo dictionary, upon the advice of Reverend F. Murphy, a man well versed in the English language. He says, and he ought to know, that it contains thousands of words more than Walker ever dreamed of. Walker died long ago and Wooster walked into his dictionary, and as he walked along supplied all Walker's deficiencies. Your Reverence, of course, according to the advice of our Reverend Father Provincial, will better walk with Wooster than with Walker, to show your fine English walking-staff.

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[13]I dare not express to you my concern regarding our present situation. It is very unhappy and we may expect to undergo all the horrors of war. In Missouri, especially, the division is greater than elsewhere. The devastations are terrible here and calamities multiply daily. Pray much and often for us.

In all probability I shall go and spend the summer among the numerous Indian tribes of the great desert east of the Rocky Mountains. They beg me urgently to come and see them. The upper Missouri river will be open by the 1st of May and I expect to start on the first boat leaving here for the Great Falls, 3,000 miles distant from St. Louis.

I returned two days ago from Washington whither I had been called by business of the Society. The Belgian ambassador, Mr. Blondeel, was very nice to me. I dined at his house with the ambassadors of France, Russia and Spain. I had a long conference with President Lincoln. At this moment the capital is guarded by an army of 200,000 men. The daily expenditures of the Government, we are assured, exceed $3,000,000.

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University of St. Louis, Feb. 27, 1862.

Reverend and Very Dear Father (Boeteman):[14]

P. C.

I have received your good letter of the 19th of January last. Your good news concerning your interesting mission of Calcutta and the schools of the Orient have given me the utmost pleasure.

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[13] Extract from letter in French to brother Francis, February 12, 1862.

[14] From the French.

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I have had a good deal of running around to do in the interest of our missions in January and February. I have been back in St. Louis since the 22d of this month. In Washington I had the honor of being presented to our President, Lincoln, and I talked with him for over an hour.

Mr. Blondeel, the Belgian ambassador, showed me a great deal of affection; he is very well disposed toward us. He obliged me to dine with him, together with the ambassadors of France, Russia and Spain. They all had their *grands cordons,* and I had a frock coat well worn and with two buttons gone. However, it all went off very agreeably. I did the best I could among these great personages; but I remain of the opinion that I shall always be more at my ease sitting on the grass and surrounded with savages, each one making his jokes and at the same time eating with good appetite a fair rib or roasting piece of buffalo or fat dog. I succeeded very well in the settlement of my business in Washington, insuring the existence of several of our missions, which had been in some danger for lack of pecuniary aid, due from the Government, for the support of four large schools, in which more than 400 Indian children are being educated, boarded, lodged and clothed.

On the 22d, Washington's birthday, I reached St. Louis and found the city all in movement. It was estimated that more than 40,000 citizens took part in the procession. It was three full hours in its passage. It was the greatest manifestation ever made in St. Louis, and all in favor of the Union "as it was." You will already have learned from the papers of the recent Union victories; I will not go into any political details to-day — the "*fiat lux*" is still a long way off.

In a good and consoling letter lately received from His Paternity, he permits me to return next spring among the numerous tribes of the great desert, east of the Rocky

Mountains. Pray, and have many prayers offered for me, and for the success of this important mission. In my leisure moments I am working at my long letter for the Reverend Father Terwecoren; he will get it soon, I hope. Meanwhile assure the good Father that my legs are still in good order, ready to perform a few more little errands of a few thousand miles or so, *Deo dante*. I stagger and fall sometimes on our slippery sidewalks, but I have always managed to pick myself up safe and sound and with nothing broken; you may add that I have not been threatened with burning alive by the Rebels. I do not think they will ever hate me as bad as that.

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St. Louis University, March 15, 1862.

Very Reverend Father-General:[15]

I have had the honor and happiness of receiving your Paternity's kind letter of the 14th of December and am very grateful for it. The Very Reverend Father Visitor and Vice Provincial do not seem opposed at present, if circumstances permit, to my going to spend the summer months in missionary work among the numerous pagan tribes of the great plains east of the Rocky Mountains, in accordance with the desires expressed in your letter. Whenever I have passed them these poor, unhappy people have always been very respectful and attentive to me, and each spring they look with eager longing for the Black-robe to come and confer baptism on their little ones. A very great number of little Indians and many adults owe their salvation, after God, to your Paternity, for I suppose that three-fourths of them die before they reach the age of reason.

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[15] From the French.

Toward the end of last February, as in July, I had to go to Washington to arrange the accounts of our Indian missions among the Potawatomies and Osages. Since the outbreak of the war and the great expenditures which it occasions, the Government is necessarily delayed in the payment of its contracts with the Indian tribes, the motto for to-day being "the expenses of the war before everything else." A sum of over eighteen [thousand?] dollars was due the missions. I presented my request to the superintendent of Indian affairs, with the remark that a refusal or delay on the part of the Government, of its debt and promise, would singularly disarrange the ideas of our Indians, who have thus far been loyal and attached to the Union side; that if we were obliged by lack of means to send some 400 children back to their poor parents, they would conclude "that their Great Father, President Lincoln, had taken the money that ought to have gone to the support of their children, and used it for other purposes," and that they might be led in consequence to lend a favorable ear to the secessionists. This all-but *casus belli* made the superintendent smile and pleased him greatly, and he promised to do his utmost to satisfy our good savages. He gave me also some good advice and indicated several influential persons who might aid me in my just demand upon the Government.

During my short stay in the capital I had the honor of being presented to President Lincoln, and of talking with him about the present state of our Indians and our missions. He showed himself very affable and very well disposed toward us, and promised me that he would favor and aid us in our efforts to ameliorate the unhappy lot of the Indians. The Secretaries of the Interior and Treasury and the Attorney and Postmaster-General were likewise very favorable to me. I succeeded in obtaining a sum of over $11,000, with the promise that the balance due the missions should be forwarded at an early date.

I called several times on the Belgian ambassador, Mr. Blondeel Van Cuelenbroeck, who seems very much attached to the Society. He did me the honor to invite me, together with Reverend Father Maguire, to dine with the ambassadors of France, Spain and Russia. These kinds of dinners make a great contrast with the Indian feasts in which I have so often taken part; where they offer you with their hands a chunk of roast dog or bear or a stew of meat hashed with their teeth. I will admit that I am more at my ease among the latter.

When I was in Washington the city and its environs were filled with military movements and occupied by an army of 200,000 soldiers. Battles and skirmishes are very frequent at present, and the losses of men are very large on both sides. It is "everything or nothing" in this war. The consequences must be terrible, but it is impossible to foresee them. The secession movement is evidently on the decline. I beg your Paternity to excuse me for mentioning these little matters about Washington. The Reverend Father Provincial suggested that they might interest you.

St. Louis University, March 28, 1862.

Mr. B. G. Caulfield:

Dear Sir.— I received your kind favor of the 26th. Your health, I have no doubt, might be greatly improved by a trip across the plains and Rocky Mountains. As to the establishing of a trading post in those distant regions, indeed, I would not venture an advice on the subject. I feel convinced that great opposition in trade from California, Oregon, Washington Territory and the east of the mountains, will meet at the mines on Salmon river. Thousands must be on their way to these mines at present. Should you apply to Doctor McParlin, U. S. A., he will tell you much about the Salmon river mines which may be relied upon. The mountains will now be thoroughly searched; the results may reach the expectations of the gold hunters, and the massacres in

California of Nomecult valley, of Matole near Cape Mendocino, of Humbolt bay, etc., will be once more renewed among the Indian tribes of the Rocky Mountains. For their safety I have kept my secret for these twenty years past. My trip among the Indians is not as yet decided; it depends on circumstances. In case I can leave St. Louis I intend to give missions among the numerous tribes east of the Rocky Mountains. Should you come to the determination of making the trip, I shall be happy to make a long portion of it in your agreeable company. Of course, I will see you in St. Louis, where we shall have full leisure in conversing on the Far West and its great prospects.

Please remember me to the Right Reverend and Worthy Bishop of Chicago. I shall soon write to his Lordship about the promise I have made to him. Present my best respects to your good lady.

Most respectfully, dear sir, etc.

St. Louis University, April 23, 1862.

Honorable Sir:

I take this occasion to return to you my most sincere thanks for the many favors and the kind services you have so often rendered me, and for which I shall ever be grateful. My present object in writing is to acquaint you with my departure for the plains and my visit to the numerous Indian tribes of the Upper Missouri. Feeling, as ever, much attached to the Union of my adopted country, the United States, I shall do all I can to promote it among the Indians, to the best of my power. The thought came to my mind, that if I could go in some official capacity from the Government (I ask for no emoluments) my object might be strengthened by it and be more efficacious. I propose leaving in the beginning of May.

I hope the two little friends on whom I had the honor and happiness to invoke a blessing, are doing well — may they ever be the joy and happiness of their worthy parents. Please present my kindest respects and regards to Mrs. Blair and to her mother.

With sentiments of the highest consideration of respect and esteem I have the honor to be, Honorable Sir, etc.

Hon. FRANK P. BLAIR, *Washington City, D. C.*

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A[18] great number of passengers are going up on the same boat (the St. Louis Fur Company's steamboat) and on several others, bound for Fort Benton on the upper Missouri. The mines of the Rocky Mountains on Salmon river and tributaries of Lewis river and in the Kootenai country, which I have known for twenty years, have been discovered anew and thousands of miners are going up at present to take possession of them.

St. Louis University, Dec. 12, 1862.

Honorable Sir:

You will pardon me the liberty I take in addressing you these few lines. I do it under a particular conviction and with the assurance that it will meet with your approbation. I read in the public prints, the other day, that thirty-nine of the Indian prisoners in Minnesota would be executed on the 20th instant, on account of the numerous murders and cruelties they have committed against the white settlers along the frontiers. Surely they deserve no better lot. The consideration, however, of the lot of the white prisoners, children, women and men, who are still alive among the band of Santees and other tribes of the Sioux, and of whom I heard not later than yesterday, makes me shudder. I fear that cruel and savage vengeance will be taken on the innocent and unhappy white people as yet under their control. If I were allowed to express an opinion, I would say: Let the Sioux prisoners be kept as hostages; let it be known to the whole nation that, for every white man they kill one of the prisoners shall atone for the murder. The murderer or murderers would thus become answerable before their own people for the execution of the hostage.

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[18] Extract from letter to Belgian Ambassador Blondeel, May 4, 1862.

With sentiments of the highest consideration and respect I have the honor to be, honorable sir, etc.

Honorable Mr. Mix,
Indian Department, Washington.

From[17] recent accounts received from the Rocky Mountains, the mining prospects in that region appear fair and enticing, and in consequence it is supposed there will be a great emigration for the upper country early next spring. You ask me for information and maps of certain gold localities in the mountains, should I be at liberty to make disclosures on the subject. You can, dear friend, appreciate my motives and reasons for the silence I have hitherto kept on this matter. They still exist and I could not in conscience deviate from the course I have hitherto pursued. In all probability I shall take another trip on the Missouri early in the coming spring. I visited a great number of Indians on my return to St. Louis last summer and baptized hundreds of children. Remember me to Hugh and pray both for me. I shall not forget you. Most respectfully, dear sir, etc.

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[17] From letters to W. H. Campbell, Sacramento River, February 4, 1863.

St. Louis University, March 6, 1863.

Reverend Dear Father HOEKEN:

I received your letter of the 13th ultimo and am most thankful to your Reverence for it. I fully concur in all you advanced in it in regard to the Osage Mission. As to my neglect of writing to you, I must acknowledge it has been apparent, though not real. What with excursions and other occupations I have postponed it from week to week, and the guilt, if any, is altogether on my side. I must confine myself to a few words with regard to my last trip among the Indians.

Fathers Giorda and Imoda have, in my opinion, done wonders at Benton and have raised a beautiful little congregation at the fort itself. Several of its inhabitants have been married by them and the women have become very pious. I married Clark to his young wife. I brought the Fathers about seventy boxes, bags and barrels, several plows, a wagon and an ambulance, all free of charge. This included at least $1,000 over and above their allowance which I had scraped together. Dawson, Clark, Champagne family, indeed, all were anxious to see your Reverence and made several inquiries concerning you. In the course of last winter the Fathers had baptized over 700 children (principally) and adults. A war between the Grosventres and other Blackfeet bands rendered traveling in the country somewhat unsafe.

In my visits among the Missouri tribes I baptized over 900 little children. I was prevented from pushing in the interior on account of the hostile dispositions of the Sioux, whose war bands infested the plains in all directions. How it will be this spring it is hard telling. It may be worse than last year on account of the hanging of thirty-nine Sioux in Minnesota, who, of course, will be revenged, if they can accomplish it. Harney is to go out against them with a large force. I will leave in all probability by the 1st of May, and may be accompanied by two or three Italian

Brothers, who are awaiting the good season to leave Maryland for Missouri. The same boat will contain a colony of nuns under Reverend M. Brouillet, Vicar General of Washington Territory, destined, I should suppose, for Vancouver.

With regard to any change taking place for the establishment of missions, on this side of the Rocky Mountains and under the superintendence of the Provincial of Missouri, no decision has been taken on the subject, neither by the Visitor nor Provincial; this must be arranged by the General and must abide its time. I would be most happy if it could be brought about, and if one or two missions could be established for the benefit of the numerous Indian tribes of the upper plains. I have written on this subject to his Paternity and spoken of it to the Visitor and Provincial.

Mr. Dawson may soon be here; he will surely expect a letter from your Reverence; you will not disappoint him, I hope. Father Visitor intends shortly to leave for California; he will be accompanied by Father Kenny. Father Provincial may soon be on his way to the Osage Mission. He read your letter attentively and will see you on the subject. I would feel happy indeed if arrangements could be made of your going up the Missouri river next May. We might pick upon a spot where a mission might be commenced in the course of the summer of 1864 — central enough for visits to the Crows, the Assiniboins, the Aricaras, the Grosventres of the Missouri, and the Mandans. If not in Missouri, means and men might be obtained in Europe. Please write to me again and remember me, etc.

St. Louis University, April 11, 1863.

Honorable and Dear Sir:[18]

In all probability, I shall leave St. Louis during the first week of next May, to make a missionary excursion among the various tribes of the Upper Missouri, including, if I can, the warlike Sioux, to promote among all, religion and friendly dispositions toward the Government and its white travelers through their countries. I shall be happy indeed if I can effect any good by my humble endeavors. My adopted country, for these forty years I have lived in it, has been always truly dear to me. Its welfare has been the constant and uppermost wish of my heart and the end of my poor prayers. I have sworn obedience to it and from this sacred duty I have never and shall never swerve. If I take the liberty to address you, it is owing to the great kindness I have always received at your hands, and because I have the full conviction that I can do it with all openness of heart and mind, and the firm persuasion, that if it be in your power, I shall receive comfort from you, and shall go on my long trip rejoicing and consoled.

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[18] Letter to Thurlow Weed.

There is an important matter on which I must beg leave to ask your counsel. You are aware that the Jesuits are a body of priests and brothers, devoted, by solemn vows, exclusively to the service of God and the spirtual good of their fellow-men. In the West here we number about 200 members, some of whom would fall within the limits of the conscription law lately passed by Congress. Our members are stationed in various cities — Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Bardstown, Ky., and in other places — all laboring in one way or in another for the good of souls. We have been here for nearly forty years, devoting ourselves entirely to the education of youth, thousands of whom have been trained in our schools and colleges, or attending the numerous churches intrusted to our care, or laboring for the civilization of Indian tribes in the Far West. And we have thus labored purely for the good of our fellow-men, without ever having received any aid from State or General Government, satisfied with that support which the liberality of our patrons has prompted them to afford us.

As I have stated, we are bound to God by solemn vows, which our conscience forbids us to violate. These vows, recognized and accepted by the Catholic Church, separate us from the world, consecrate us to a life different from that of other members of our Church, and subject us to the canon law of the Church which strictly forbids priests and religious men, who have taken these vows, from taking up arms in any cause whatsoever. We are ministers of peace, and in all ages this sacred character has been regarded as opposed to war and bloodshed. Such is the law of the Church, and this law binds our consciences. We cannot violate it without doing violence to our duty to God; and therefore we cannot obey any law which would require us to violate that duty. You perceive the predicament in which this places us at the present moment, and from which I desire your advice to enable us to extricate ourselves.

As to the remedy of paying $300 for each member that may be subject to the draft, I must say that it is scarcely fair to require this of us, who are really not subject to military service, by reason of the life we have embraced and of the conscientious obligations it imposes upon us. And besides this, such a sum paid for all those who might be called upon among us, would prostrate all our establishments and leave us destitute of the means for carrying on the works we have undertaken for the good of our countrymen. We are struggling hard to keep these up; the war has inflicted severe losses upon us, as upon many others; and if we cannot escape the conscription without paying what the act prescribes, I do not see how we shall be able to continue our exertions.

Please give this matter your serious consideration, and if you can suggest any means of extricating ourselves from this perplexity, you will confer an infinite obligation upon me, by informing me of it. We have here a conflict of duties; we desire as far as possible to comply with both; but we cannot sacrifice our conscience, and our resources are too limited to allow us to comply with that condition on which alone the act of Congress will recognize our exemption.

With sentiments of the highest consideration and esteem, I have the honor to be

Honorable and Dear Sir,
Your very humble and obedient servant,

P. S.— When passing through Albany, some six or eight months ago, I paid a visit to Miss Weed, who did me the honor of asking a photograph of my poor self, to place in her beautiful album. I remember to have left one, bearing but a small resemblance. Allow me, Dear Sir, to substitute the inclosed, with my best respects to your kind and good daughter.

St. Louis University, December 24, 1863.

My very dear Brother (Francis) and my very dear Charles and Paul:[19]

I wish you a very happy New Year, filled with all the benedictions of heaven. I have just reached St. Louis after a long journey of about eight months and after having covered a distance of nearly 4,000 leagues. I have passed through many dangers, the details of which I will give you later. I set out from St. Louis at the beginning of last May. I went up the Missouri river for 2,400 miles, as far as the mouth of Milk river. I then continued my route on horseback for some 1,200 miles, visiting our various missions east and west of the Rocky Mountains. During my mission I had the consolation of baptizing upward of 400 Indians. At Walla Walla, a city of some 2,000 souls, in the Territory of Washington, I embarked upon the Columbia river for Portland, the principal city of Oregon — distance 400 miles. From Portland I went to Victoria, the capital of Vancouver Island; thence to San Francisco in California; thence to Acapulco in Mexico, and thence to

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[19] From the French.

Panama; distance, 4,500 miles. I crossed the Isthmus of Panama, forty-seven miles; at Aspinwall I took ship for New York, 2,000 miles, and from New York came to St. Louis, 1,200 miles. Upon arriving in St. Louis I found your good, dear letters of the 29th of July and 23d of November. I am very grateful to you for them. My health is not good, but that is generally the case after each long journey that I make. The cessation of fatigues uses me up more or less and it takes me some little time to get back into my ordinary equilibrium. I will write you more fully later.

Upon my arrival in New York I forwarded a box to Gustave van K.'s address. It contains two beautiful buffalo robes of extraordinary fineness, like silk; one painted deer skin, some moccasins or Indian shoes (my dear Alice is to choose the prettiest pair for herself), seashells from Acapulco and Panama, and some photographs of Pierre Jean. I wrote Gustave to divide them with Charles and Paul. In the same box are three copies of *Western Missions and Missionaries* and six of *New Indian Sketches*, recently printed in New York. Please have a copy of each work sent to M. le Chanoine de la Croix and to Reverend Father Terwecoren at Brussels.

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In all probability I shall return to the mountains some time in April next. I ardently hope to hear from you soon and often.

Believe me, etc.

St. Louis University, February 26, 1864.

[20]Dear Francis:

I wrote you on the 24th of December, immediately after my return to St. Louis, in reply to your good letters of July and November. I was very much indisposed at that time and my letter was necessarily short by reason of my indisposition. It is only in the last three days that I have begun to recover a little strength and to go out. I hope my strength may return and enable me to return among the plains Indians in April. Insensibly the years pass on. I find myself already in my sixty-fourth year, and I feel a conviction that my end is near — *fiat voluntas Dei.*

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[20] From the French.

What is troubling me greatly at present is that I do not receive any letters from the family, nor any reply to mine of the 24th. It should have reached you by the 10th or 11th of January, and for the last fortnight I have been sending to the post-office in hopes of finding something from you. Charles and Paul called for a long letter from me; you can assure them that I am working at one in all my leisure moments, and in spite of the numerous occupations that have accumulated during my long absence and my sickness, my letter will be ready before long. * * *

Mr. De Coster will tell you all about the sad and fearful American war: it is going to be horrible this year.

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Your devoted brother, etc.

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The[21] numerous gold mines that have been discovered in this new Eldorado in the last three years are drawing thousands of inhabitants and their number is continually growing. To-day the miners are spread over the country from the Gila to the Fraser and from the Pacific Ocean to the sources of the Columbia, the Missouri, the Colorado and the Rio Grande del Norte. While some, starting from the shores of the Pacific, push their search eastward, others begin at Pike's Peak and the Rocky Mountains and advance toward the West. From both sides they come together in

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[21] Extracts from a letter in French to Father Terwecoren, S. J., dated at St. Louis, March 26, 1864, describing Father De Smet's visit to the Rocky Mountain Missions in 1863.

Oregon, in the Territories of Washington, Nevada, Idaho and Utah, in the Caribou Mountains and in Arizona, and an immense population is sure to come to fill up all these countries. "On to Idaho!" is the great cry of the day, the *magnum Hadium* of our miners.

I have known of the existence of the precious metals in this region for many years past, and the thought has always filled me with apprehensions for the future of our Indian tribes who inhabit it. On the 3d of September, 1845, while I was on missionary duty among the mountain Indians, I wrote (page 125 of the *Oregon Missions*) "Poor, unfortunate Indians! they trample on treasures, unconscious of their worth, and content themselves with the fishery and chase. When these resources fail, they subsist upon roots and herbs; whilst they eye, with tranquil surprise, the white man examining the shining pebbles of their territory. Ah! they would tremble, indeed, could they learn the history of those numerous and ill-fated tribes that have been swept from their land to make place for Christians who have made the poor Indians the victims of their rapacity." When I wrote this paragraph, I did not think the discovery so near. To-day it is upon us; and this ceaseless current of immigrations, following one another like the waves of the sea, will, I think, be the sorrow and the ruin of our poor Indians.

Here is a little of what is going on to-day in Idaho. This Territory embraces the mineral and gold-bearing regions of the Beaverhead and Stinking Water rivers, upon which the towns of Bannock (East) and Virginia City have been built, east of the Rocky Mountains. West of the mountains, the main immigration is flowing into the Deer Lodge valley, on Salmon river, the Boise valley, the Orofino, the Warren mines and a large number of other mineral localities recently discovered. The principal new towns in this part of Idaho are Lewiston (the capital) situated at the junction of the Clearwater and Snake rivers; Orofino City, south of Lewiston; Elk City, Florence, Placerville and Bannock City (West). All these places are already of significant commercial importance, and each has a population of about 1,500 inhabitants. A considerable trade has been developed also at Forts Boise, Benton, Owen, Lemhi, Hall and Bonneville. Some of these forts contain garrisons, or rather a few soldiers to protect the emigrants against the depredations of the numerous bands of Indians that roam all over the immense territory. These statements in regard to new towns have reference only to 1861. That same year the production of gold was valued at $5,000,000; in 1862 it amounted to over $20,000,000.

St. Louis University, Oct. 5, 1864.

Very Reverend Father-General:[29]

I hope your Paternity will have received my long letter of the 20th of August last. In it I gave you a little outline of my missionary work and my latest excursion among the Indians of the Upper Missouri. Immediately after my return to St. Louis the Reverend Father Provincial sent me to Washington to look after the Society's interests. The Government had withheld for eight months the payments due, by treaty, to the Indian schools among the Potowatomies and Osages, amounting to the sum of $13,810.60. The urgencies of the war required all the public funds; but upon my request, backed by several of the cabinet ministers, I was able to obtain the sum of $10,197.06, with the assurance that the balance, $3,613.54, should be allowed the respective missions in the course of a month.

There was another affair that was disquieting us greatly — the universal conscription from which neither priests nor members of religious orders are exempt. Father Verdin and Brother Flanigan, in Kentucky, had already fallen under the lot and been drafted. I addressed myself to the Secretary of War, and by the Lord's favor, through the

[29] From the French.

intercession of the Holy Virgin and the prayers of my brothers, I was able to obtain their liberty, with the formal promise of the Secretary "that hereafter he would exempt all our people who might be called on for military service." In order to evade the law the Secretary orders our conscripts "to stay at their homes until he calls for them;" and this call, according to his promise, shall not be issued so long as the war lasts.

The Reverend Father Provincial has made known to me his request to your Paternity, to be allowed to send me to Europe in the interest of the Province of Missouri, and the reply which your Paternity has deigned to make. Since the season is advancing I shall set out toward the middle of this month. I implore, as a most particular favor, your permission to proceed as far as Rome, in the interest of the poor, numerous Indian tribes, who have been for so many years imploring the succor of the Black-robes to come and announce to them the word of the Lord. This would procure me at the same time the aid of your paternal advice and the benediction of the Sovereign Pontiff and that of your Paternity. I shall await your response at Brussels.

I have the honor to be with the most profound respect and the most sincere esteem

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St. Louis University, Aug. 22, 1865.

Major-General PLEASONTON, *Milwaukee:*

Dearest General.— I received your kind letter and am very sensible indeed to the continuation of your kind remembrance. All the letters I have received from you are carefully preserved and serve me as memorials of the happy days I have enjoyed from the time I had the honor and pleasure of making your acquaintance.

With regard to the inquiries you make in your letter, on the Pointed Arrow or Flint creek, I shall openly state to you all I have heard about it. I think the time has come that I may do so, without injury to the Indians. I must add, that my sole authority rests on an old (to me) reliable Indian, whose name I do not now remember. When he saw the first gold dust and examined it, he smiled and exclaimed, "Is this the yellow sand the whites are in search of? I know a place," he added, "where all the sand in the hollows of the rocky creek looks like it." I interrogated him on the locality. He described the head of Pointed Arrow creek as being a very rough and elevated region, with rapid torrents, deep ravines and high water-falls, which can only be reached by scrambling on foot, at least for some distance. As to the different branches of said creek, no mention was made, and this leaves the direction of the yellow sand greatly in the dark. I proposed to my old Indian friend to take me to the spot he had spoken of. He readily accepted my request, and on the very instant showed great willingness to serve me as guide to his "yellow sand" region. This promptness, in my opinion, added strength to the information he had given.

Several causes prevented me at the time from executing my first design. First, there was then as yet much snow in the mountains; second, I feared my excursion might become known to the whites and half-breeds then in camp and might be detrimental to the Indians, and lastly, I was in hope that by hurrying on my journey toward Fort Benton (we were then in the beginning of July) I might arrive in time to meet the boat of the American Fur Company. I came four days too late.

Here I give you the whole account of the Pointed Arrow creek, as far as I heard of it. It may arouse curiosity and excitement; people may run in fruitless search of the coveted dust; they may run great risks and undergo great fatigues and privations in examining the numerous mountain torrents of that rough and broken region, and they may be long (should they find it at last) before they may discover the identical rich spot the Indian had spoken of. Was his information truthful? I own I believed him; he is considered among his people as an upright and good man.

Should I be able to reach the mountains once more — I may perhaps try it next spring — I shall do my best to meet the same Indian, and so I might, and would be most willing to, be of service to your friends. I give you candidly both sides of the medal. The success of the affair appears rather doubtful. I would be sorry, indeed, to have been the instrument of useless and great trouble, to those you take interest in recommending so warmly. I have stated the for and against; I hope meanwhile, sincerely, that your friends may meet with full success.

Some days ago I received letters from General Frost, now in Canada, to obtain permission to return to his family in Missouri, He has taken the prescribed oath of allegiance and he writes to President Johnson. I have been round to obtain signatures of some of our most influential citizens, who signed a petition to the President for the return of General Frost. I have forwarded all the papers to Major-General Jas. Hardie with a request that he will take an interest in the matter. Should you know him, may I make bold enough to entreat you to drop a few lines to General Hardie, or to any other influential gentleman you know in Washington, to obtain the desired pardon in favor of Frost.

With sentiments of profound respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.

St. Louis University, St. Louis, Feb. 26, 1866.

Governor GILPIN, *Denver, Colorado:*

Dear Governor.— I received your most friendly letter of the 2d instant. I shall ever be grateful for your very kind remembrance of me and shall daily pray for your success, happiness and welfare. I read your message with the deepest interest and pleasure. Henceforth the bright star of

Colorado must shine lustrous among the stars of our great Union.

The graphic and beautiful description you give me of your great estate in Colorado, with its primitive Catholic population, is truly very interesting and encouraging. The people, no doubt, are every way worthy to be looked to in a religious and temporal view. If my avocations permitted I would assuredly visit you. What I cannot do, for I am called to Montana on urgent business, another of the Fathers may more profitably and better be able to undertake. In all probability Reverend Father De Blieck may shortly leave on a visit to Santa Fé, where he has been invited by the Right Reverend Bishop Lamy, to give missions in his extensive diocese. On his way thither he might pass through Colorado, pay you a visit at Denver City and confer with you on the subject of your letter — on what might best be done for the welfare of the 6,000 Spaniards living on your estate. He speaks the Spanish well, which will be of great advantage.

I hope the whole affair will meet with the full approval of our friend, the Very Reverend Mr. Macheboeuf. As the rumor will have it — and it is assuredly a most favorable and happy one — he will be appointed first Catholic Bishop of Colorado. As you well know already, you will find him a most worthy and efficient gentleman, well worthy of your kind attention in assisting you to carry out your Christian and benevolent views. He will assuredly accomplish a great deal of good in Colorado, among his Catholic brethren and his Protestant friends.

At my return from Montana in the fall, should it be in my power, I shall make an effort to reach Denver City and shall be most happy to pay you a visit. As to the welfare of the numerous Catholic Spaniards settled on your estate, I see the possibility, with proper aid, of conferring a great benefit upon them by establishing a mission and schools in their midst. Three or four Spanish Fathers might, I think, be obtained from Europe, and some members of our establishments in St. Louis. Remark well, I only express here first and private thoughts, for I am not the Superior. I see in it a great act of charity and kindness on your part, and feel most inclined to urge the matter, by counsel and advice, to the best of my power.

I will leave St. Louis in the beginning of April next. Should this reach you in due time, I shall consider it a great favor to receive another letter from you before my departure. Should you have any commissions for Montana, forward them to me, and I shall faithfully attend to them.

The[23] Reverend Father Provincial tells me that there are rumors relative to the nomination of a Vicar Apostolic for the Territory of Montana. He has received letters on this subject from Father Damen of Baltimore and Father Hill of Cincinnati. He tells me that together with Fathers Giorda and Grassi, I appear on the list. I will explain to your Paternity all that I know in regard to this matter. Some four months ago Monseigneur the Archbishop of St. Louis informed me that Monseigneur the Bishop of Nebraska and Montana had sent him a letter from Father Giorda, wherein the Reverend Father urgently recommended the establishment of a new vicariate for Montana, where great numbers of Catholics are gathering, their numbers increasing from day to day. Monseigneur the Archbishop asked for information concerning Father Giorda, and has often expressed the desire that a vicariate should be conferred upon a Father of the Society. From information received by the Reverend Father Provincial, he thought the nomination will be made before long and I am assured that the thing will be decided at the approaching General Council, to take place in Baltimore in September of this year. Between now and then there will no doubt be great modifications. If my name appears on the list of Monseigneur of St. Louis, as the Reverend Father Provincial assures me, it is, I take it, with the idea of filling up the list, on which ordinarily three names are entered. In sincere conviction of my lack of virtues and talents for such a task, and believing that your Paternity will be consulted in so important an affair, I consider myself perfectly safe against such a danger. Nothing in the world, with God's favor, could part me from my vocation and from obedience to my superiors in which my only desire is to live and die.

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[23] Extract from letter in French to Father-General in March, 1866.

St. Louis University, Nov. 6, 1866.

Dear General Meagher:

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After I left you at Fort Benton my occupations have been somewhat arduous and laborious. I made several long visits and stays among the various Indian bands I met along the Missouri, particularly at Fort Berthold, at Sully and at the Yankton agency, near Fort Randell. The result of my intercourse with the Indians has been very consoling to me. I baptized over 500 children and a good number of adults. Among these was the old chief of the Yankton Sioux, surnamed Pananniapapi, or the Man Who Strikes the Ree. His band consists of about 3,000 souls. Should my health permit I intend to establish a mission among these Indians, in the coming spring, and if possible and practicable, shall visit most of the Sioux tribes in the interior north and south of the Missouri, in company with Pananniapapi and some of his braves. I have made all preliminary regulations with them to that effect.

I learn with the greatest pleasure and interest the pleasant and agreeable visit you have made with Mrs. Meagher to St. Ignatius Mission and rejoice that my wagon has thus been of some use to you. I am sorry indeed to hear of the indispositions of our worthy and good Giorda. I trust and pray that the rest he is enjoying at St. Ignatius, after his laborious missionary excursions, may soon restore him. I am thankful, at the same time, for all the good news you give me of my other dear brothers in Christ and concerning the good Sisters of Providence. I hope ere this all the goods I brought over to Benton will have safely reached them. As I have heard nothing of them since, I must own I feel somewhat uneasy.

The letter you had the great kindness to write for me on the prospects of Montana was published in the *Guardian of St. Louis* and was extensively copied by the other Catholic papers in the Union. I forwarded the number containing said letter to your address in Virginia City, which, I hope, will have reached you. Your long and interesting letter on the Rocky Mountain missions, I sent to Very Reverend Father Weld, Provincial of the Society of Jesus in England, immediately after my arrival in St. Louis toward the middle of August. I confided it to the care of a friend on his way to Europe, together with several letters of my own on my late missionary excursion. I learned a few days ago that they did not reach their respective addresses.

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I would gladly comply with your request, in your last letter, if I were in a condition to do it. For the present time I find it impossible. I am kept very much occupied with the performances of the numerous duties imposed upon me by my office, and together with indispositions and necessary excursions I find it indeed difficult to attend to all of them. After a little while I may probably have to proceed to Washington in the interest of our missions among the Potawatomies and Osage Indians, which will occupy me for a good while. I shall not omit the occasion to recommend strongly our missions in Montana and Idaho. I regret exceedingly not to have a full knowledge and statement of their position and their wants. What you have written to me in your letter of the 18th of September last will, however, be of immense service and I intend to use it the best way I can. I am fully persuaded that it is now the best time to make proper application and to obtain redress. Colonel Bogy, who entered on the office of superintendent of Indian affairs on the first of the present month, and with whom I have been well acquainted for years, is a most conscientious and practical Catholic and determined, I feel confident, to do full justice to the Indians. On all occasions you have feelingly shown a particular and great interest in the prosperity of our Rocky Mountain missions. This would be the proper moment to present to the superintendent a statement of your views on this important subject. I am confident it will meet with the best of results. I have likewise informed the fathers of the appointment of Colonel Bogy and advised them to act without delay. I have communicated to General Sherman the paragraph of your letter relating to the military localities on Judith and Sun rivers. I see from the papers that the general will soon leave for Mexico to place the country under the protectorate of the United States until its future will be decided by the general elections.

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With sentiments of the highest consideration of esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, etc.

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I[24] have a special favor to ask of you, as follows: In my recent mission in the Indian country I stopped for three weeks at Fort Buford, opposite the mouth of the Yellowstone. The commandant of the fort, Colonel Rankin, entertained me at his private table for three weeks. I was awaiting there deputations from the Crows, Assiniboins and

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[24] Extract from letter in French to Reverend Father Coosemans, September 3, 1867.

Santees to confer with us concerning the proposals which the Government sent them through me. During all my stay at the fort the colonel did everything possible for me, and I have thought it my duty, in a spirit of gratitude, to make him a return (American fashion); and knowing that a good meerschaum pipe would be very acceptable to him, may I venture to ask your Reverence, while you are in Europe, to give some connoisseur-amateur-smoker the commission of procuring me a meerschaum to present to the worthy colonel?

I should have written you in my last letters especially about the good dispositions of the Yanktons, of whom Pananniapapi is the chief. All the children of his tribe are now baptized. They desire most ardently to have a mission of our fathers; the money granted them for schools by their treaty with the Government has been pilfered from them by their previous agents. The principal chiefs of the tribe authorize me to assure you that they are willing to devote two to three thousand dollars a year to the establishment and maintenance of the mission.

St. Louis University, August 30, 1867.

Very Reverend Father (Roder).[25]

I have often proposed writing to you, but as the affair is so personal to me and seems to have so little claim on your attention, I have always put it off. But as the motives which seem to urge me to it are on the increase, after having recourse to prayer and consultation, I have concluded to send you these few lines, confiding wholly in your indulgence and charity. I will try to lay my case clearly before your Reverence.

I have been more or less engaged in the Indian missions for something like thirty years. The Reverend Father

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[25] From the French.

Roothaan, of blessed memory, imposed it upon me as a duty to write very fully in regard to them and to enter into minute details upon everything that concerned the Indian missions, the diverse countries inhabited by the Indians, the manners, customs, beliefs, etc., of these strange and unfortunate tribes. My numerous letters consisting of five volumes bear witness that I have at least endeavored to discharge the duty laid upon me, and with humility and assurance, I hope that I can add that I have tried to do it faithfully. The present Very Reverend Father-General encourages me by his letters to continue to give the details of my missionary labors year after year. All the superiors and provincials of Missouri have also called for them, and I have always been submissive to their requests in the spirit of obedience. Pardon me this long preamble, Very Reverend Father, which I have thought necessary to bring the case before you.

For some years past I have been subjected to criticisms, often personal and malevolent, on the part of several German priests, who are saying in America, on the testimony of one or several Fathers of your province, that my name is only an assumed name in the letters which are printed and the books that are published afterward bearing my name. The reverend and good Father Hasard, after his arrival at St. Louis, declared that it was the opinion in his province that I merely lent my name to the letters that were published. In the course of last month, in the Upper Missouri and during my mission among the savages, I met and made the acquaintance of the Reverend Joseph Anthony Maria Gaes of Freiburg in the Grand Duchy of Baden, Germany, cousin of the Reverend Father Augustus Gramm, S. J. During our familiar and fraternal conversations and interviews, I read him copies of three long letters upon the mission among the Indians in which I was then engaged. The reverend gentleman expressed his gratitude, accompanied by an admission which surprised me; this was "that the reading of my letters had rid him of the unfavorable impression concerning me which he had received from the Reverend Father Rothenflue before his departure for America. That this reverend and very worthy Father (whose name is held in high esteem among us) had assured him in confidence that I was not the author of the letters that were published in my name," etc.

Pardon me for having thought that I might bring this little complaint to your Reverence's consideration. I will admit that I am sensitive to a personal attack which I have in nowise deserved and which has cost me much labor. My personality is a very small matter and deserves little attention, but our province of Missouri is more or less compromised. It would not permit such a fraud or imposture.

Regarding the letters printed in my name and with my superior's permission, I am alone responsible for them. In the mortuary notices of some of our brethren, I have asked for and received information and in accordance with the desire of my superiors I have compiled and had them printed. In all my long journeys and extended missions I have got information where I could obtain it, and have given it for what it was worth, always indicating the source. In my missions among the savages I instruct, question and examine them, and then give the result with anything edifying that belongs with it. Everything has been written *ad majorem Dei gloriam* and under the impression of a duty toward my superiors. I declare, Very Reverend Father, that the printed letters bearing my name are due to no other person, and permit me to protest to your Reverence against those of your province who advance the contrary. Reverend Father Rothenflue, whom I cite, is very well known to us by his works and we hold him in the highest esteem and veneration. What he advances regarding me is upon hearsay; that hearsay is false. The whole province of Missouri, if need were, would subscribe to my declaration.

Pardon me for having written so long a letter upon so poor and painful a subject. I am weak and sensitive and have been insulted several times upon the false reports I mention. The thirty-sixth chapter of the *Imitation* (book 3) consoles me and I try to profit by it. As Thomas à Kempis tells us, "St. Paul sometimes justified himself, lest his silence should be a cause of scandal to the weak."

In union of your holy sacrifices, etc.

I[28] have read with pleasure in your number [*Précis Historiques*] of September 15th the extract from the *Courrier des Etats-Unis* upon the death of the Omaha chief, Logan Fontenelle. At the time of my first mission at St. Mary's near the Council Bluffs among the Potawatomies, I was very intimate with his father, a fur trader among the Indian tribes. I gave him the last sacraments at the hour of his death. In 1838 I baptized his four children together with their mother, the daughter of the chief of the Omahas, Ongpatongha, or Big Elk. Logan, the oldest of the children, was my godson. Later, in his extreme old age, I also conferred baptism on Big Elk. After this chief's death Logan succeeded his grandfather and made himself liked and respected by all his nation, both by his bravery and by his wisdom. He ardently desired to have a mission of Black-robes for the instruction of his tribe, but for lack of men his wishes were never fulfilled, and others naturally came in and settled in the field.

The chief, Ongpatongha, always deserved and kept throughout his long career the respect and esteem of the whites, of his own people and of his neighbors. He was a man of peaceable disposition, in his dealing with others of exemplary honesty and rare intelligence. He was considered the ablest speaker of all the tribes of the plains.

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[28] Extract from letter in French to Terwecoren, October 11, 1867.

St. Louis University, December 9, 1867.[27]

Mr. N. RANEY, *Secretary of the Historical Society of St. Louis:*

Dear Sir.— I received your kind favor of the 5th instant and your kind invitation of the 16th ultimo. I intended to answer by attending your meeting of the Historical Society of St. Louis on the 7th. This being Saturday I was much occupied at St. Francis Xavier's Church, and I regret I was unable to accomplish my desire on this occasion.

The question of locality which has arisen about old Fort Atkinson, or Council Bluffs, built in 1819, I think I can answer satisfactorily. During the years 1838 and 1839 I resided opposite what is now called the city of Omaha. In 1839 I stood on the bluff on which the old fort was built in 1819; some rubbish and remains of the old fort were still visible, and some remaining roots of asparagus were still growing in the old garden. Fort Atkinson was located where now stands the town of Fort Calhoun, Nebraska Territory, about sixteen miles in a straight line above the city of Omaha, and forty miles by river. Mr. Cabanné's trading post was ten miles by land above where now stands Omaha city. Manual Lisa had a trading post one mile above Cabanné's. I met Captains Joseph and John La Barge, and proposed the question of the former site of Fort Atkinson, in order to test the accuracy of my memory, and they confirmed it in every particular.

Most respectfully, etc.

St. Louis University, December 26, 1867.

Mr. A. D. JONES, *Secretary Old Settlers' Association, Omaha, Nebraska:*

Dear Sir.— My absence from St. Louis has delayed my answer. You have the kindness to inform me that we are still entitled to a reserve of land on which the old mission-house and graveyard were located in New Council Bluffs. All I could learn on the subject is: Several years after the last missionary among the Potawatomies left that location he was applied to by the Catholic bishop of Dubuque, and ceded to him all the right to the mission claim. How the bishop has acted upon this cession in his favor I have never been informed. I would feel obliged to you to obtain further information on this subject.

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[27] This and the following letter are from vol. I, Nebraska State Historical Society's reports.

To the best of my personal knowledge, and assisted by Captain Joseph La Barge, the old explorer of the Missouri river, I will here answer your various queries: First, "Where was old Fort Calhoun located?" Fort Calhoun was never located; it took the name of Fort Atkinson, which was built on the very spot where the council was held by Lewis and Clark, and was the highest and first military post above the mouth of Nebraska [Platte] river. Second, "Where was old Fort Croghan?" After the evacuation of Fort Atkinson or Calhoun, either in 1827 or 1828, or thereabouts, the troops came down and made winter quarters on Cow island — Captain La Barge states it was called Camp Croghan. The next spring the flood disturbed the soldiers and they came down and established Fort Leavenworth. Colonel Leavenworth was commandant at the breaking up of Fort Atkinson. Third, "There is an earthen remain of fortifications on the east bank of Omaha; do you know who built it?" The remains alluded to must be the site of the old trading post of Mr. Heart. When it was in existence the Missouri river ran up to the trading post. In 1832 the river left it, and since that time it goes by the name of "Heart's Cut-Off," leaving a large lake above Council Bluffs city. Fourth, "Do you know of either soldiers or Indians ever having resided on the Omaha plateau?" I do not know. A noted trader by the name of T. B. Roye had a trading post from 1825 till 1828, established on the Omaha plateau, and may be the first white man who built the first cabin on the beautiful plateau where now stands the flourishing city of Omaha. I cannot call to memory the signification of the word Omaha.

My time is much occupied at present. Should I find later any point worthy of communication in reference to our old mission, the New Council Bluffs, or the early history of Omaha and Nebraska, I shall take great pleasure in forwarding it to you.

Very respectfully, etc.

St. Louis University, Sept. 10, 1869.

(Mrs. General SHERMAN.)

Most Honorable Madam.— Your very kind favor of the 15th ultimo, concerning your charitable gift for our Indian missions, came duly to hand. I must on this occasion rely upon your great indulgence and trust you will, in your kindness, overlook my deficiency and fault in not answering sooner. I expected Father Converse to leave soon for the East, together with some of our young Fathers and scholastics, destined for the scholasticate of our Society in Maryland. It was my intention to hand him my letter and hence in part my delay.

I have had immediate use for your kind and charitable gift and have bestowed it in your name on our Indian missions in the Rocky Mountains, learning from recent letters that some of the Fathers needed assistance.

I took this occasion, Madam, to recommend you, the general and your whole dear family most earnestly to the prayers of the missionaries and their good neophytes. I pray daily at the holy altar for the pious intentions expressed in your two letters. I shall offer up once each week the holy sacrifice of mass for your private intention and that the Lord may favor you all with his choicest blessings. Allow me to recommend myself to your good prayers and to those of your dear children.

Since my return from Europe, my health has not been very good, owing particularly to the excessive summer heat from which we have now just escaped. Should I feel strong enough before the end of this month I intend to make an endeavor to reach Fort Rice before the great cold sets in. With this object in view may I ask you the great favor to obtain from the general a letter or note to be used if necessary as a passport in the upper Missouri country. On former occasions the kind recommendations of the general have been of a great avail to me among the military gentlemen in the forts who were always very obliging in favoring and aiding my intercourse with the Catholic soldiers.

I have consulted General Parker, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, on my intended trip among the Sioux of the upper Missouri country. My views have been most favorably received by him and have met with his best approbation and good will.

Please present my best respects to our worthy and great general and recommend me to the pious remembrances of your dear children.

I have the honor to be, Madam, etc.

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My[28] health leaves much to be desired. The heat of July and August has been very oppressive and I continue to be under the influence of a general languor and feebleness. I have a more and more sincere and serious conviction that my end is near. Do not forget me in your good prayers.

I have just made a little test of my strength and have succeeded so well that I have hopes, *Deo dante,* of being able to accomplish my visit and mission to the Indians of the Upper Missouri. Upwards of 10,000 savages whom I visited in the course of the year 1868 have gone to the reservations appointed for them by the Government. My adopted brother (and consequently your uncle), Two Bears, head chief of the Yanktonnais at the head of 800 lodges or about 7,000 souls, invites me to come and is awaiting me impatiently.

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[28] To Nephew Paul and Niece Augusta, Oct. 7, 1869, in French.

I am just back from Omaha whither I have escorted six Sisters of Charity and I feel stronger. Those zealous sisters are on their way to Helena, the capital of Montana. I am glad to have been able to participate in their undertaking and to furnish all the funds for their long journey.

St. Louis University, October 4, 1869.

Governor BURBANK, *Yankton City, D. T.*:

Honorable Sir.— Though personally unknown to you, allow me to address you these few lines. I have been particularly and earnestly requested, by very respectable gentlemen in St. Louis, who take great interest in the welfare and affairs of Mr. F. F. Gerard, a trader among the Indians in the upper Missouri country, who applies for a renewal of his license to trade in that section. I have known Mr. Gerard and have been intimately acquainted with him for upward of twenty years, and with full confidence and assurance, I hesitate not and readily give him the following testimonial.

In my long intercourse and visits to the Indian tribes on the Missouri river I have often had occasion of meeting Mr. Gerard, particularly among the Aricaras, the Grosventres and Mandans at Fort Berthold. I have always considered Mr. Gerard as a true friend to the Indians, assisting them in their need and advising them to keep up peace and quiet toward the whites. I hesitate not in adding that it is particularly due to Mr. Gerard and to his well-timed advice and persuasion that the three united bands of Indians at Fort Berthold did not go over to the hostile bands of Sioux who (the Sioux), to my certain knowledge, made strong endeavors and tempting promises to seduce the above three tribes from their allegiance to the Government. This occurred whilst the Berthold Indians were under severe sufferings from various sources which I need not here mention.

As regards the trade of intoxicating liquors to the Indian tribes, it has been my constant conviction, as far as my experience and information may tend, that Mr. Gerard among all the traders has been amongst the foremost to oppose the infamous and iniquitous trade.

Pardon me for the liberty I take in addressing you on the present subject. I write under a strong and sincere persuasion that Mr. Gerard is well worthy of your kind attention. I owe him great personal gratitude for the kind assistance he has given me on all occasions during my intercourse with the Indians around him and found him always their true friend and benefactor.

With sentiments of the highest regard of respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, Honorable Sir, etc.

St. Louis University, April 8, 1870.

Honorable E. S. Parker, *Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.:*

Honorable Sir.— Hereby I acknowledge the receipt of your valuable report to the Secretary of the Interior for the year 1869, together with the report of the appointed Indian commissioners, for which accept my most sincere thanks.

Allow me to add a few personal words. Age is bringing on a decline of health. I am now in my seventieth year and somewhat suffering. Though I have not as yet been able to resolve on my trip to the Upper Missouri Indians with any degree of certainty, I am, however, desirous about it and hope the advancing spring will somewhat renovate my strength and permit me to accomplish my wish. The welfare of the Indian has been for thirty years the dearest object of my heart. Should I be able, I intend to leave St. Louis for the upper country shortly after Easter.

Permit me most earnestly to recommend to your kind attention, my friend F. F. Gerard, who for a great number of years has been a trader among the Missouri tribes and with whom he has in great measure become identified. I have always considered Mr. Gerard as a true friend to the Indians, particularly at Berthold, and by his wise counsel and advice he has prevented these Indians on various occasions from joining the Sioux on the war-path. If in your power, and should you approve his bond and license as a trader, it shall be very gratefully remembered.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant, etc.

St. Louis University, Dec. 20, 1870.

Dear General:

I wrote this morning to Doctor Cody in answer to his recent letter and insinuations against young Mr. Keller. I am afraid there is something doubtful or wrong in the case; and feel happy that it is placed in your hands for examination and with the full conviction that justice will be done. I hope there is nothing very serious on either side.

I will give you here, verbatim, a copy of my letter to Doctor Cody, which perhaps may be of some use, knowing exactly what I have written: * * * "I am sorry to hear of the troubles you met with at the agency and particularly of the implication of Mr. Keller, which astonishes me greatly on account of my previous opinion of him. * * * I have had no particular acquaintance with the young man. I know him only from report. I know his worthy parents to whom he has ever been a true and filial child, assisting them in their need as far as his means would allow him. At our college in St. Louis he has merited the esteem of all his professors by his conduct and application. General Harney during his stay in the Upper Missouri country valued highly his services, and so did the worthy Major Hearn until his departure from the agency. It is on those testimonies that I have particularly recommended Mr. Keller to you, and in so doing I acted under the persuasion that he would be of great service to you on account of his experience in the country and his knowledge of the people and their language. I never intended my recommendation of Keller as an obligation on your part to keep him in your service and I beg you to pay no further attention to it. General Stanley has written to me on the subject. In my answer I have let the general know the sort of relation or sympathy existing between Keller and me. I am confident that the case, having been referred to the general, will be strictly examined into and Keller will be treated accordingly.

"Dear Sir, allow me to state on this occasion that in my long missionary career of over thirty years I have made it a rule not to lend myself or interfere in any differences that may occur between parties. I try my best to attend solely to my spiritual ministry for the welfare of my white brethren and that of the well-disposed Indians who may desire to receive my services. In the case of Keller he should not be kept in office on my account as stated in your letter."

The rest of my letter to Mr. Cody has no reference whatever to Mr. Keller.

You will pardon me, General, if I trouble you with such little matters. Should Keller prove guilty do not spare him; if innocent protect him. Please let me know the result as I have innocently been somewhat mixed in the affair and both parties have had recourse to me, the one to dismiss under vague accusations, the other for the protection of his good name.

With sentiments of profound respect and esteem, etc.

St. Louis University, June 19, 1872.

Honorable Secretary C. DELANO, *Washington, D. C.*:

Honorable Sir.—I received yesterday a letter from the Honorable D. Wood, Governor of Utah, of which the following is a faithful extract: "Having been informed that the Fort Hall Indian Agency had been taken from the Catholics, I had a conference with Honorable C. Delano, Secretary of the Interior, when he was here (Salt Lake City) recently, relating to the matter; and he informed me that he desired to make reparation in the premises. I suggested and strongly recommended that there should be a Superintendent of Indian Affairs appointed for Utah Territory, and urged the appointment of Major M. P. Berry, the late Indian agent at Fort Hall, a Catholic and a good man, thoroughly competent, and in every way worthy of the place, and stating that in my judgment the Catholic Church would be much better satisfied with the superintendency than with the agency. He consented to create the superintendency and said that if the Catholic Church would ask the appointment of Major Berry, he would appoint him. During my administration as Governor of Oregon Major Berry was an appointee of mine and I know him to be in every way worthy of your confidence."

The Governor states: "That in his judgment the Catholic Church would be much better satisfied with the superintendency than with the agency." On this point allow me to observe Governor Wood labors under a great mistake. The Catholic Church exercises no pretensions whatsoever of this sort. All that the Catholic bishops and missionaries aim at, in this country of religious liberty, is to be allowed to follow on their right, in accordance with their call from above, to evangelize the Indians who have received them with joy, and not be turned out of the missions where they have labored for years with zeal and fervor for the welfare and salvation of the Indians, as has been the case in several sections.

Governor Wood urges me to write at once to the Indian Department and ask the appointment of Major Berry as Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Utah. The Governor speaks in terms of the highest commendation of the major and I have no doubt he is a very competent gentleman. In this I feel as if interfering in an affair entirely out of my sphere and can only offer in excuse for my writing that I am complying with the request of the worthy Governor Wood.

Allow me to observe upon this occasion, with regard to my appointment in December, 1871, to represent the Indian Catholic missions in the United States, with the consent of several Archbishops; that this appointment should with all propriety belong to those bishops in whose dioceses Indian Catholic missions exist, or some representative they may name, and who may be consulted when occasion requires. My health and age and want of competent knowledge of the various districts in which Catholic missions exist, render me altogether unable to fill the important office with the due attention it requires and I humbly send in my resignation.

With sentiments of profound respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.

Note.—This letter remained unanswered.

St. Louis University, Sept. 4, 1872.

Reverend and Dear Father:

P. C.

I must acknowledge the receipt of your very interesting letter from Elm Dale and wish your Reverence great success in the erection of a monument and chapel to the memory of our glorious Father Jogues.

The extract from Father Boeteman's letter, concerning Theophile Wickers, was literally copied. The boy, no doubt, resides either in Brooklyn or Williamsburg, in the one where *Meserole* street exists. Father Boeteman's Apostolical College will not be opened before ——— 7, ——; there is, of course, plenty of time to send him the required information.

As you say, the letters of Mr. Hickey have cleared up my doubts and I have since sent him a supply from my little Indian paper shop. My weak state of health does not permit me to write and to occupy myself with my former unprinted letters on this side of the Atlantic. I lack a good number of them. However, a new edition of all my letters (five or six volumes) is now under progress of publication in Belgium. When out I shall procure a copy of them for Mr. Hickey. He will find in the last volume all he may need.

I learn with pleasure from your letter that Mr. Hickey will tend to the translation. As regards the copyright, please arrange the affair with him. I am not versed in any such matters and cannot imagine that any importance can be attached to such a production. Should it meet with success, as translator, let him have the principal benefit of it. All I would expect would be a charitable remembrance in favor of our poor Indian missions, actually in the utmost want.

I have a series of letters on my expedition, as chaplain in the army under General Harney, during the Indian war against the Government in Montana and Idaho, in 1858–59. The contents, pretty much, of the two first letters were published in the *New Indian Sketches* (by Sadlier & Co.) shortly after my return from the expedition. I wrote them somewhat later in French, and I think more fully, for the *Précis Historiques.* Some little changes may make them suitable for the *Catholic Review* and would make the other letters of the same series more clear and readable. I note this to have your opinion, if it be not putting your Reverence to too much trouble. I would like to spare Mr. Hickey as much trouble as possible, and I am sorry to be rather unable, on account of my infirmities, to attend to these matters myself.

In union with your holy sacrifices and prayers, believe me to be, etc.

[20]I have just received your good, dear letter of the 21st — a most agreeable surprise for me; for in these days it is an occasion of consolation, every time any family news reaches me. I shall continue to feel most grateful to all those who write to me and remember me. I pray especially for them every time that I have the happiness of being able to ascend to the altar and offer the holy sacrifice of the mass. Encourage them all to write to me often, though it be only a few lines. I am not well, dear Emile. Since last March, when I had my first attack at Brussels, I have had several severe recurrences, and my strength is leaving me very perceptibly day by day. Since my return to St. Louis I have hardly left my room, and my cane has become my support and my constant companion. *"Usque Quo?"* Is it hard to guess? I pray to God every day to obtain his holy grace, that he may grant me great patience in my little miseries and ailments. * * *

This is a really curious time here, and amusing for a neutral onlooker. The city of St. Louis, and it is just the same everywhere, is flagged from one end to the other, for Greeley and for Grant. Every night brass bands with their banners tramp the streets, accompanied by thousands of partisans uttering hurrahs, waking everybody up and burning enormous quantities of powder. It is a nuisance — and still I have come to find it amusing; the world has to go on and be busy. And after all there is no great harm in it, whether it be for Greeley or for Grant. One is about as good as the other.

Europe, you say, is in suspense to know which of them is to win: it seems just as difficult to decide here. The individual majority is in favor of Greeley; but Grant has all the means of corruption and seduction on his side, and is ready with all his adherents in office to make use of this means to achieve his re-election to the presidency. You can consider it as a settled thing: it will even be hard hereafter to get Grant out of the White House. Grant is * * * a cipher in himself, a plaything and very humble servant of our American radicals, exactly as William of Prussia is the valet of Bismarck.

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[20] Extract from letter in French to Nephew Emile, Sept. 6, 1872.

St. Louis University, Feb. 18, 1873.

Major J. C. O'Connor, *Grand River Agency:*

Dear Major.— I received your very kind favor of the 10th instant, from New York, announcing your immediate departure, via Chicago, for Grand River. I would have been very happy, as well as many of your friends, to have received a visit from you in St. Louis. I feel most grateful for the interest you take in my health. The severe winter we have had has rather gone against me and I have hardly been able to leave my room and I constantly remain under severe sufferings and pain. The fact is, together with sickness, old age is coming fast on me. I hope the approaching spring may be of some service in regaining lost strength and general health. In regard to my prospects of seeing the Indians in the spring later, it is difficult to determine beforehand and under my present indispositions. Should there be any prospect on my part, I shall certainly inform you in due time. It is probable that Captain Joseph La Barge will make a trip to Benton during the coming spring. I know he would grant me comfortable quarters, and if my health any ways allows of the trip I shall feel desirous of giving it a trial. I receive frequent letters from the Indians of Montana and Idaho entreating me to come to see them once more.

If you meet General Stanley and family, please present them my best respects. Remember me most kindly to my friend, Mr. D. Keller, to Captain Hammon and lady and to Mrs. Galpin and her young daughter.

I obtained a fine photograph of Two Bears and Running Antelope, made in Washington, which I intend to send to my relatives in Europe where they will be highly prized, as I made mention of them in my letters.

Please remember me to all my Indian acquaintances and friends. I often think of them and remember them daily in my prayers, begging the Lord to bless them all.

Please write at your earliest convenience.

Most respectfully, etc.

St. Louis University, March 24, 1873.

Major J. C. O'Connor, *Grand River Agency:*

Dear Major.— I received your very kind favor of the 1st instant and am truly grateful for your kind and friendly remembrance. I am happy to learn that you reached Grand River agency in good health and found all the Indians under your charge quiet and well-disposed. I sympathize sincerely with my good Indian friends who have been very severely visited by sickness this last winter and lost many of their dear children. I pray for them daily that the Lord may have pity on them and take them under his holy protection. Among the whites in and around St. Louis, hundreds of children and adults have died and are still dying of a raging sickness in our midst. The Fathers are constantly on the go night and day to visit and console the sick and prepare them for a happy eternity. I add this particularly that you may acquaint our Indian friends with our pitiful situation here.

I learn with the greatest pleasure, and for the advantage of the Catholic missions, that you have great prospects of being appointed one of the five inspectors. You are well worthy of the honor and I sincerely hope and pray that you will be charged with the important office, and trust our

Fathers in Montana and Idaho will be highly pleased with your appointment. This will open a chance to our dear friend Dan Keller. You speak of him in the most recommendable manner and as well worthy of succeeding you in the Grand River agency.

As you have learned, I have sent in my resignation to the Secretary of the Interior and can no longer present the name for any Catholic agency. I am, however, confident that your own recommendation will bring the matter about and with good results, having been an eye-witness of Mr. Keller's good administration of the affairs of the agency during your various absences, and of the confidence and popularity he has acquired among all the Indian bands by the incessant interest he has taken in their welfare. Should you think it opportune, you might speak in favor of Mr. Keller to the worthy General Stanley, whose recommendation would be of the greatest service. General Ewing in Washington might also favorably be appealed to, as he takes great interest in the Catholic missions.

The coming photographs of our Indian friends, as promised in your letter, I shall most gratefully receive. Accept my sincere thanks. I thank you for the interest you have taken in settling my account and promise to Bazile Clement.

When you see General Stanley and family please present him my best regards, as likewise to Major Clark and lady.

Captain La Barge's boat (*De Smet*) is advertised for Benton and will leave St. Louis on the 12th of April. My room is kept ready and at my disposal. Should my health permit I shall gladly undertake the trip. I had of late a very severe attack of sickness. I am again convalescent and in good hope.

Please present my kindest regards to Mr. D. Keller, to Captain Hammond and lady, to Mrs. Galpin and young daughter and to all other acquaintances. Remember me most kindly to all the Indian chiefs and friends.

Most respectfully, etc.[30]

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[30] Apparently Father De Smet's last message to his "dear Indians."

St. Louis University, May 12, 1873.

Reverend Dear Father Ward:

Please accept of twenty-eight intentions, to be said at your earliest convenience (*dantium*).

My best respects to all, particularly my old friend Father Gailland. I would be happy to receive a letter and to let me know the exact dates of St. Mary's Mission and when established on Sugar creek?

When on Kansas river?

How many churches were built by the Fathers? By whom? In what counties? To what saints dedicated? Of what material built?

When was the college built?

When was the convent built, etc.?

In my sickly moments I collect materials which may be of great service for the future history of the Missouri province.

Pray for me.

Rae Vae Servus in Xto,[21]
P. J. De Smet, S. J.

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[21] Father De Smet's last letter.

CHAPTER IX.

SELECTED LETTERS RECEIVED.

Nicollet on his plans — Demers to the unknown priests — McLoughlin on transportation — On cattle — On deserters — Harriote on Blackfeet and interpreters — Rowand on Americans — Some bishops and others on De Smet — Benton on De Smet's services to the nation — Stevens asking assistance — Correspondence from army people — Schoolcraft, Thurlow Weed, Seward and Lincoln — General Stanley's estimate of what De Smet accomplished in 1868 — Letters from Indian men.

Washington City, March 18, 1840.

Reverend and Dear Friend:

HOW much I thank you for the good letter you wrote me on the 5th of February last; it reached me in thirty-five days. The news you gave me interested me greatly, particularly poor Dixon's sketches relating to the Big Sioux. There was a difficulty about the lower portion of that river regarding which he and old Dorion, who lives at Fort Pierre, could not agree. One claimed that Broken Kettle river emptied into the Missouri, and the other said into the Big Sioux, and Dixon was determined to clear the point up. It turns out that Dixon was right, according to his sketch, which I am very glad to get and for which I thank you really with all my heart. Your zealous pains to help me arouse my profound gratitude. As to the mistake about the lakes higher up on the Sioux, that is all settled, because I explored that region completely two years ago. Poor Dixon! May God keep his good soul. He is a man whom I truly regret.

I write in great haste, to take advantage of the departure of Mr. Sanford, who leaves in a few hours for St. Louis, in order to go up the Missouri with the company's steamboat, as he did last year. He will have the pleasure of seeing you and handing you my letter. I am very sorry not to be of the party, but I am forced to remain here three or four months yet to put all my works in safety, publish my maps and a long report before I start on any other expeditions in which some accident might destroy everything. But I have a plan which will permit me to see you again at your mission, and it is not impossible that I might spend the winter not far from you, so as to be ready to make a dash for the mountains as soon as the season opens. I am also very sorry about Mr. Fontenelle whom I had hoped to have with me.

If you should happen to see Mr. Gauss, please remember me to him and tell him about my plans and tell him to write me. I should be happy to learn that he still entertains the idea of making such a campaign with me. You must try to go as far as Fort Pierre this year where your apostolic zeal would be quite necessary. Then if you see Louison Fresnière, tell him too that I depend on having him with me for two or three years, and that when the time comes I shall come after him.

I would have liked to send you some souvenirs, but Mr. Sanford's departure allows me no time to attend to it. You will lose nothing by waiting; I shall bring you what I cannot send. I shall be really grateful if you can give me the information asked for in my last letter, as you offered to do. You see that we can correspond with security and that our letters come through all right. Mr. Chouteau is very careful to forward them when they come to his hands.

Adieu, dear and excellent friend. Think of me, as I never cease doing of you, and thanking you.

Present my respects to your dear partner in the mission and to good Mr. Papin. Wholly yours in respect and attachment,

J. N. NICOLLET.

Camp of the Pend d'Oreilles, August 6, 1840.

Reverend Missionaries:[1]

Though I have not as yet the pleasure of knowing your names, I eagerly take the opportunity which is presented to send you news of the two poor missionaries of the Columbia, knowing that I am writing to Catholic priests, ministers of our holy religion, who have generously come to sacrifice themselves for the salvation of the savages. With what joy and contentment have I learned of your arrival among the Flatheads! I thought at first that you had been sent to our assistance to share the immense task which we have on our hands. For from the upper waters of the Columbia to the wild tribes scattered far down the Pacific Ocean is what we have to cover and visit, without mentioning the two Canadian establishments — one on the Willamette river and the other on the Cowlitz. It is at these two places that we have our principal residences. You have no doubt heard that we were sent hither in 1838 by way of the canoes of the Honorable Hudson Bay Company, which gave us our passage *gratis*. It was not long before we were aware of the need of help. We have written to Canada, but we have the grief of being still but two, to make head against everything, especially to arrest the progress made by so many Presbyterian and Methodist ministers, who are in occupation of the principal posts of the region because they got here before us. It would take too long to tell you all that they say to the Indians against us and our holy religion. We ought to have eight more priests, besides ourselves, to occupy various posts; there is a chance to do a great deal of good. I have left Fort Vancouver to make a missionary excursion in the upper region of the river, as I did last year.

I have come thus far this year. I am at no great distance from you, but I do not hope to have the pleasure of seeing you before I leave. I shall, however, wait at Kettle Falls for the return of Mr. McLean's people, who I hope may bring me word from you. While I am here, Monseigneur the Grand Vicar, Francis Norbert Blanchet, is occupied in visiting the posts below the river. I must hasten. I wish you health, strength and prosperity in your noble but laborious undertaking. You will succeed better than we among the savages, because you have no enemy to oppose you. I have heard to-day from an Indian that you are to come to Colville. In that case I should have the satisfaction of seeing you, since I do not expect to leave that place before the 21st or 22d of this month. Meanwhile receive the most affectionate respects and salutations of your

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[1] Addressed "Révérends Prêtres, Missionaires Catholiques, Aux Têtes-Plates."

Very humble and obedient servant,

MODESTE DEMERS,

Ptre Miss.

Baltimore, March 12, 1841.

Reverend and Dear Friend:[a]

I have received in the course of the year the interesting communications which you have sent me. I need not tell you how agreeable they have been to me. They had only one fault, that of being too short. I would have been especially glad to have news from you since your return, but I suppose you are very busy making ready for your new campaign. Fortunately Mr. Geyer has been able in some measure to make up for this by telling me about your interview. I should be very happy, really, to be able to start out in the spring to continue my work to the other side of the mountains and to have you for a traveling companion. But I cannot get away this season. It is indispensable that I should stay here to finish my geographical works, which are by order of Congress to be published as soon as possible. Mr. Fremont is finishing a large map to give it to the engraver and I am busy with a volume to accompany the map. We hope the whole thing may be finished for the next session of Congress. Then we will be able to turn our eyes toward the Far West and entertain the hope of coming out to meet you there. Congress has just voted the necessary funds for a new expedition to continue the geographical work which I have brought as far as the Missouri river. I do not know whether the new administration will cast its eyes upon me to direct this great affair, though the general opinion seems to leave no doubt on the subject; nor do I know whether my health, which has been greatly shattered by excessive labor, will permit me to accept when the time comes. In any case I do not disguise how greatly I should love to see the prairies once more and to cross the mountains. If, therefore, all these probabilities together should come to realization, I shall find myself in St. Louis in the latter part of next fall to make preparations for the expedition and to get it in motion as early as possible. Then, my dear and honored friend, I shall not forget the various recommendations that you have made me, both in the interest of my own enterprise and with a view to being of use to those whom you honor with your protection.

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[a] In French.

If you can, I beg of you to give me word of yourself before you start. Have you kept your instruments? I hope to be able to bring you others more numerous and more complete. The observations that you made for me at Council Bluffs are of inestimable value. You will see some day what I have said about them.

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Adieu, dear and honored friend, etc.,

J. N. NICOLLET.

Vancouver, Sept. 27, 1841.

To Reverend P. S. De Smet, *Flathead Camp:*

Reverend Sir.— I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your esteemed favor of the 17th ultimo by my friend, Mr. Ermantinger, and I beg to congratulate you on your safe return and to assure you. I am extremely happy to find that you and your worthy associates are to be residents in this part of the world and intend to devote yourselves to the laudable object of teaching the doctrine of the Christian religion to these poor deluded savages and that the Almighty may vouchsafe to bless your endeavors in this world and reward you in the world to come is my prayer to our heavenly Father and with such sentiments as these I presume it is unnecessary for me to assure you it will be my great happiness to have an opportunity of affording you the least assistance in furthering your pious object and we will be happy to furnish you with anything our stores contain and to assist you as much as we can to transport it to the interior, but I beg to observe our means of transport as you may have been informed are limited and the packages ought not to be too bulky so as to go conveniently into a boat nor above ninety pounds weight so as to be easily handled and as our means of conveyance are not always at command it would be necessary you sent us your list of demands in the month of January for what you require in the spring in the month of March for what you require in June and in the month of July for what you may require in the fall and winter — and as I already observed our means of conveyance is limited I do not think we would be able to transport for you in one year more than thirty packages (though if we can we will do it) and perhaps some years not that quantity as far as the post of Walla Walla from whence your people will have to take them with horses to your place — the cost and expense of which you will have to pay by bill on London, and if there is anything else in which I can be of use to you, please command me as I am, with the greatest esteem and regard,

Your obedient humble servant,

JOHN McLOUGHLIN.

Vancouver, Sept. 27, 1841.

To the Reverend Mr. De Smet:

Reverend Sir.— I am pressed for time as I cannot detain my courier any longer and I can only observe that after mature consideration for these several years I am fully convinced that the most effectual mode to diffuse the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church in this part of the world is by establishing it on a good foundation in the Willamette and Cowlitz among the settlers — as the Indians will form themselves on what they see done by the whites the Reverend Messrs. Blanchette and Demers have done and are doing an incalculable amount of good among the whites and Indians, but they are too few indeed there is more than sufficient employment for you all in this quarter — but of course this could not be — "the harvest is great, but the laborers are few." But if one of you with one or two of the lay brothers could come to assist Messrs. Blanchette and Demers till their reinforcement came from Canada it would be an immense benefit to religion and the only apology I can give for thus obtruding my opinion is that from my long residence in the country I have a right to claim some knowledge of it — and I am certain from your zeal in the cause you only require information to act up to it if in your power. It is my intention to go this fall to the Sandwich Islands and next spring, please God, I hope to have the pleasure to see you here. Allow me to return to you my thanks for the pictures and chaplets for Mrs. McLoughlin and Mrs. Rae and kind respects to yourself and colleagues and my fervent prayers to our heavenly Father for the success of your labors.

I am, etc.,

JOHN McLOUGHLIN.

Vancouver, Sept. 28, 1841.

To the Reverend P. J. De Smet:

Reverend Sir.— As I do not know in what part of the country you may be and as it may be convenient for you to get cattle from the Snake Country I do myself the pleasure to inclose you the accompanying orders — if you take the cattle I will to replace them purchase the like number on your account from the settlers here — and I beg to observe as next year it is probable I may order down to this place the supernumerary cattle at those establishments it is necessary you let me know by first opportunity if you will take any so as to enable me to decide on the number to have, and I also beg to observe that you will not be able to get these cattle this season, but will next summer.

I am, etc.,

JOHN McLOUGHLIN.

Vancouver, Oct. 12, 1844.

To the Reverend Father De Smet:

Reverend and Dear Sir.— I beg to return you my thanks for your kind note by Doctor Barclay.

There is a man called Brown who deserted from Mr. McDonald at Colville some years ago and I understand is now at the Jesuit mission about the Flatheads or Pendant D'Oreilles bay. I beg to observe that you ought not on any account allow deserters to receive any employment or assistance directly or indirectly from the mission. These deserters are all bad men and make up plausible stories by which they work on the feelings of the good Fathers who often believe all that these men say take pity on them and give them shelter and the consequence is, the Fathers incur the ill will of others and excite opposition to the cause to which they devote themselves and all this to oblige men who are not deserving of any favor. If I may presume to give you an opinion allow none of these men about any of your missions and praying that our heavenly father may Bless and prosper your labours.

I am, etc.,

JOHN McLOUGHLIN.

Vancouver, Oct. 14, 1844.

Reverend Father De Smet:

Reverend and Dear Sir.— I forgot to mention to you that we have a trading establishment on the Umpqua about 200 miles to the south of this. The country is fine, the plains extensive, and we have forty head of cattle there and raise abundance of grain for the use of the establishment and there is a fine place for a mission on the banks of a river (we are going to place the establishment there) about eighty miles from the ocean and to which we believe vessels of 100 tons may come, taking it altogether from situation, means of living and population (there are about 150 persons) which is quite manageable — from a long intercourse with our people—It appears the best situation for a mission that I know and besides this you can establish a mission in another place farther south from which you can open a communication with California at once and where you are so desirous to penetrate and where I am certain you and your worthy colleagues would do a great deal of good — besides the great advantage it would be to those missions to have a communication through the country and with California. But besides the places to which I allude there are several small rivers along the coast between the Columbia and San Francisco which are accessible to small vessels and afford excellent situations for missions. I regret much it did not occur to me to mention this to you when you were here, but your sickness and occupation and my occupation prevented my seeing you as much as I wished and other subjects drove this from my mind the short time I had the pleasure to see you and praying our heavenly father that he may assist protect and Bless you and your worthy colleagues in your pious labour

I am, Dear Sir,
Your obedient humble servant,
JNO. McLOUGHLIN.

Endorsement to "Reverend Mr. P: De Vos, Catholic Mission, Willamet."

I have just received this letter, which I forward to you, from the worthy and excellent Mr. McLoughlin. If our [force] was double or triple and our means proportionate, establishments might be started in various parts of this vast territory with the greatest advantage to our holy religion. We must obtain information. Messrs. Blanchet and Demers can give you a great deal, but before deciding anything the different places must be visited and personal investigations made. Much good will, I hope, be done in Lower Oregon; the Reverend Father-General desires that it be not neglected, but the mountains also will require much care and money. The good Lord will provide. Thank Mr. McLoughlin in my name.

Yours,
P. J. DE SMET, S. J.

Rocky Mountain House, March 30, 1846.

The Reverend PERE DE SMET:

My Dear Sir.— The arrival of Vellenuer yesterday put me in possession of your kind favor of 13th March. I was extremely happy to learn that you had recovered from your indisposition, but am still anxious that you will have some difficulty in accomplishing the voyage you have undertaken.

I sincerely hope that you may overcome them all and have a happy meeting with your friends who must naturally be very anxious for your welfare.

I am sorry to inform you that I am still in bed but have some hopes of improving when the fine weather sets in. I do not suffer as I did some time ago.

We have seen a great number of Blackfeet and Surcees since I last wrote, but nothing of Bird or Munro. I am very doubtful whether we shall see them, from what the Assiniboin who saw them last say about them.

I have delivered your two horses and three mules with your little property to Lambert as per accompanying account. There are a few loose articles which Lambert may perhaps make use of which he promises to account for, and there were some articles that I retained to be deducted from your account with the company, a copy of which I shall transmit to you by the first conveyance.

I regret much not having the pleasure of seeing you before you took your final departure from us, but I must beg you accept of my most profound esteem and may the Almighty God, whom you serve, forever protect and preserve you, is the sincere wish of dear sir,

Your humble and affectionate friend,

J. E. HARRIOTE.

P. S.— The mule you left at Bow river was found by the Blackfeet and purchased from them by Lambert with some difficulty; they were very loath to give her up.

J. E. H.

En Route. Trading ground between the South Branch, going up, September 2, 1846.

PIERRE DE SMET:

My Dear Sir.— I pray sincerely to God that these few lines may find you in the land of the living in the full enjoyment of health and happiness.

Many is the time I have been speaking of you since we parted. Sir George Simpson I met at Red River would have been delighted to give you a shake of the hand. My poor daughters often mention your name, your ways and that of the Reverend Mr. Thibault are so very different. They cannot have the same regard for him. You know how often he comes to Edmonton in the course of a winter, when he is sent for only. At one time I had almost determined in my own mind to make the Willamette my home, but now that the Americans are to have the Columbia and every part worth anything, it will not do for British subjects. What will our friend the doctor think of that arrangement between the two Governments. I hope he will lose nothing by it. Perhaps the Hudson Bay Company may enter upon some sort of arrangement with the American Government. We will know more about this in due time.

We have troops coming up now for Red River. I left five boats to assist to bring them up. Mr. Francis is to be one of the conductors to bring them up as far as Harvey House. It is supposed he will not go home this season.

My daughters will be disappointed after what I said to them of the Columbia and of the good nuns at the Willamette. They and myself esteem and respect those remarkable fine women who have given everything in this world to make Christians, etc., of the poor natives. Were I this moment in Columbia I cannot say what I would do for the sake of my family. I was at Red River this spring, from there went down to the Factory.

What a summer for sickness! I had as many as thirty-five of my men sick at one time; we were not able to stir; but thank God none have died, whereas many belonging to the other different brigades are gone. The natives about Factory, Oxford House, Harvey House and Red River House have suffered greatest; no less than 300 died at Red River. At all the places I mention they have been dying;

also about Cumberland House twenty-four are dead. I do not know if the sickness has reached the posts on the Saskatchewan yet. I expect to be at Carlton in five or six days when I expect to get news from above.

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Your sincere friend and obedient servant,
J. ROWAND.

Cincinnati, Feb. 22, 1847.

Would that I had words to express, or that we who love God, and who know what it is to save innumerable souls, could feel how exceedingly interesting to faith and to charity should be the Indian tribes of Oregon and Nebraska! Never, since the days of Xavier, Brebeuf, Marquette and Lallemand, has there been a missionary more clearly pointed out and called and sent for this great work, than Father De Smet, who is requested to present this testimony to the friends of our missions. His plans, I sincerely believe, are all heaven-inspired — as his labors have been sustained by heaven — and they who have the means and the will to aid in so glorious a cause of God and of religion will surely see in heaven the souls they shall have thus been rendered instrumental in placing there.

Should there be any in England, France or Belgium, who chance to be acquainted with or who may favorably regard anything to which my name is attached, to such I beg most earnestly to recommend the Indian missions, west of the Mississippi, in behalf of which Father De Smet again is willing to risk a life which has been too often already exposed, with a martyr's heroism, in the same sacred cause.

X JOHN B. PURCELL,
Bishop of Cincinnati.

[SEAL.]

Baltimore, March 12, 1847.

Reverend and Dear Sir:

I cheerfully comply with your request that I should give you a few lines in behalf of the great missionary undertaking which induces you again to seek across the ocean additional means of prosecuting it to a successful issue. Although I must say that your modesty alone could have suggested the request; as your long and perilous labors among the ferocious savages of Oregon are known to the whole Catholic world and will commend you to the veneration and charity of all who shall have the happiness of seeing you.

You can the more confidently appeal to the friends of religion and humanity; inasmuch as looking for no earthly reward yourself, save privations and hardships, your only wish is to " spend and be spent " in the service of thousands of benighted and degraded souls who demand at your hands the blessings of faith and civilization.

You have my most earnest prayers for your success in your eminently good and heroic work. And I shall be happy to avail myself of any opportunity to shew you with what sincerity, I am your faithful and affectionate servant in Christ,

SAMUEL
Abp. Balt.

Reverend P. J. De Smet, S. J.

My Dear Father De Smet:

Will you allow me press on you the acceptance of the accompanying statement, not for you but for the object you have most at heart, with a request that if by chance it should be useful for your neophytes of the Rocky Mountains, you will not hesitate to use it.

The undersigned cannot allow the Reverend Father De Smet, S. J., to embark for England without doing himself the pleasure of stating, for the information of the friends of the Catholic Church in Europe, how greatly the bishops of the Province have been consoled by the wonderful success which has attended the labors of this devoted missionary and his colleagues among the savage tribes of the Rocky Mountains.

It is now several years since the bishops of the United States urged the good Fathers of the Society of Jesus to charge themselves with the apostolic work of evangelizing the red children of the forest on the eastern shores of the Pacific. Almighty God seems to have blessed the undertaking.

If the zealous Father De Smet could only find means to extend the good work to the new missions which invite him, and to consolidate what has been so happily begun in the others, there is every prospect that many hundreds and even thousands of souls would be thereby brought to the knowledge of Christ, and aggregated to the one fold of his holy church. It would be, of course, superfluous for me to recommend to the friends of religion, a missionary so well known and so justly revered as the indefatigable apostle of the Rocky Mountains, Father De Smet.

X JOHN HUGHES,
Bishop of New York.

NEW YORK, *April* 22, 1847.

I[a] have reason to believe, Very Reverend and Dear Father, that a brief sketch of the present state of the rising church in Oregon will prove acceptable to your Reverence. There are now the following establishments:

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[a] Extract from letter from Father De Vos to editor of the *News Letter*, October 19, 1847.

1. The cathedral of St. Paul at Willamette or Oregon city.
2. The church of St. John the Evangelist in Willamette.
3. St. Francis Xavier at Cowlitz.
4. The chapel of St. James at Fort Vancouver.
5. The new church of the Willamette prairie.
6. The Catholic school of St. Joseph at Willamette (Oregon city).
7. The chapel, convent and female academy of St. Mary's, Willamette.
8. The residence of St. Francis Xavier, Willamette.
9. The residence and church of St. Mary's among the Flatheads.
10. The mission and church of the Sacred Heart among the Cœur d'Alènes.
11. The mission and church of St. Ignatius among the Kalispels of the Lake.
12. The station and chapel among the *Chaudières.*
13. The station and church of St. Francis Regis among the half-breeds, between the Kalispels and Chaudières.
14. A church built by the Indians at Stuart's lake, New Caledonia.
15. A church built by them at Fort Alexandria, New Caledonia.
16. A church built by them at the Rapids, New Caledonia.
17. A church built by them at Appatoka, New Caledonia.
18. The station of St. Peters, upper lake of the Columbia.
19. The station of St. Francis Borgia among the upper Pend d'Oreilles.
20. The station of the Assumption among the Arcs à Plats.
21. The station of the Immaculate Heart of Mary among the Kootenais.
22. The station of St. Joseph's among the Okinagans.

This is the result of what Almighty God has already done and still does in this distant corner of the world, since the year 1838, when the first missionaries, the present Bishop and Reverend Mr. Demers, arrived in Oregon. There is not the least doubt that if we had a greater number of apostolic laborers, men endowed with humble and docile minds, with disinterested and prudent zeal, with sound judgment and robust health, and above all with solid and exemplary piety, incalculable good could and would be done among the settlers, but more especially among the native tribes.

Office Supt. Ind. Affairs,
St. Louis, April 19, 1851.

Rev. P. J. De Smet, Present:

Dear Sir.— Understanding that you will shortly start for the upper Missouri country on your missionary labors, and intending, as you are aware, to hold a treaty or treaties with the various prairie Indians at Fort Laramie in September next, you will do me a favor by informing such of the upper tribes as you may see, of the intentions of the Government, which are more particularly set forth in the circulars herewith, which I will thank you to distribute to any persons that would be likely to make known their contents to the Indians. Should your other engagements permit I shall be rejoiced to see you at Fort Laramie. Any sketches that you can take and the outlines of maps of this prairie and mountain country will be of great importance and would be highly appreciated by the Government, as well as any information with regard to the habits, history or other interesting matters appertaining to the upper Indians.

Wishing you a pleasant and prosperous journey, I remain, Dear Sir,

Respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
D. D. MITCHELL,
Superintendent Indian Affairs.

St. Louis, April 7, 1852.

My Dear Father De Smet:

I have just received a letter from Lieutenant Beale, of the United States navy, who was lately appointed a Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California, under a special law, and on account of his knowledge of those Indians and his just and humane conduct toward them. Mr. Beale desires me to enable him to make your acquaintance, and to obtain your co-operation in doing the best for these tribes, he having understood that your labors might extend to California, and being so well acquainted with your character as to believe that, in co-operation with the civil authority, you could do more for these poor people — more for their welfare and keeping them in peace and friendship with the United States, than "an army with banners." I can add that this is not only his opinion, but that of the authorities at Washington, and my own. When I was there this winter I had a conversation with the Secretary of the Interior (the head of the Indian service) and also with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, on this subject, and they concurred in the views of Lieutenant Beale which I have stated to you. In fact it was I, myself, and in consequence of my knowledge of your meritorious services in the missionary field, and upon some intimation a year ago that you might go to California, that brought this point under the notice of the authorities, and I shall be happy to be of any further service in carrying it out. I shall write to Lieutenant Beale, and give him whatever answer that I may receive from you, and can assure you that if you meet with him you find a warm and generous heart, and one who duly appreciates your character and services. He has been much with Colonel Fremont in California, in whom, also, you know, you will always find a friend — the more so since your consolatory ministration in my house.

Affectionately,

THOMAS H. BENTON.

Father De Smet and Oregon Territory.

At the meeting of the National Institute, held at Washington on Monday evening, March 19th, Mr. Wilkes, in the course of some very interesting remarks on upper California and Oregon, took occasion to express his indebtedness to the Jesuit Father De Smet for much valuable information obtained from him in relation to the course of the rivers in Oregon and other matters, which he had incorporated in his map of that Territory, recently published in his narrative, and which was exhibited for the inspection of the members of the institute.

This acknowledgment for scientific information from so high a source does not derive its value from its personal connection with Father De Smet, but from the circumstances that it furnishes another example of the devotion to the cause of humanity which has always characterized the disciples of Ignatius of Loyola. At a moment when Europe is attempting to eject from its bosom these ardent cultivators of science, to whom it is indebted for so much of what is valuable in civilization, we find its members unostentatiously engaged, very far beyond the confines of civilization, in treasuring up those valuable observations which are to become the landmarks of the unlettered pioneers in the wilderness beyond the Rocky Mountains. It must be gratifying to Father De Smet to know that when that country shall have been peopled by an industrious population, his explorations will be spoken of as those of his predecessors now are in the valley watered by the Father of Rivers and upon the borders of Lake Superior.—*Newspaper clipping.*

Reverend and Dear Father:

Inclosed you will find a small sum of twenty francs which I have been commanded by the Duke of Brabant to send you for your missions. Will you have the kindness to return me the receipt of said sum, signed by you. I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you to-morrow at W. Donnets.

Ever most respectfully and affectionately yours,

J. H. CONWAY.

19 Oct. '52.

Washington, D. C., April 11, 1853.

Dear Sir:

The exploration of a railroad route from the sources of the Mississippi river to Puget's sound has been placed in my charge, and I am now busily engaged in making the necessary arrangements and collecting all possible information in reference to the route. Starting from St. Paul's about the middle of May, my intention is to keep to the northward of the Missouri and, passing through the country of the Blackfeet Indians, explore carefully all the passes in the Rocky Mountains between the sources of the Missouri and the forty-ninth parallel. From your work entitled "*Oregon Missions*" I have derived great pleasure and much information; but I understand that since its publication you have journeyed extensively in the western country, particularly between the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers. The object of my writing at this time, therefore, is to ask of you such additional information as you may be able to give me. The geography of the country, the Indian tribes, their numbers and character, the missionary and trading posts, I am particularly anxious to receive information about. The labors of the missionaries in that country I feel a great interest in and should be glad to receive from you letters to such as I shall probably meet upon my route.

I shall hardly be in St. Louis before the 1st of May, but I promise myself the pleasure of making your acquaintance then. My agent, however, Lieutenant Saxton of the army, precedes me to make arrangements and will reach St. Louis in a week's time. I have requested him to call upon you to get your suggestions in reference to matters of transportation, etc., and shall feel under great obligation for any suggestions you make make.

Yours very respectfully and truly,
ISAAC I. STEVENS.

Telegram.

St. Louis Telegraphery, April 22, 1853.

The following dispatch has just been received, dated Washington city, April 21, 1853:

To Father P. J. De Smet:

Sir.— Is it an absolute impossibility for you to go with my expedition? It will be a great opportunity to meet your friends among the Indian tribes, and you would render great service to them and the country.

Answer by telegraph paid here immediately.

Yours, etc.,
ISAAC I. STEVENS.

War Department,
Washington, May 13, 1858.

Sir:

The President is desirous to engage you to attend the army for Utah to officiate as chaplain. In his opinion your services would be important in many respects to the public interest, particularly in the present condition of our affairs in Utah. Having sought information as to the proper person to be thus employed his attention has been directed to you, and he has instructed me to address you on the subject, in the hope that you may consider it not incompatible with your clerical duties or your personal feelings to yield to his request.

It is proper that I should apprise you that the existing laws do not authorize the President to appoint and commission chaplains; but should you consent to join the expedition for Utah and remain sometime with the troops there, you will be allowed a reasonable compensation for expenses and services. When the law authorized the employment of chaplains, as it formerly did, the pay and emoluments were $1,000 or $1,200 per annum. This amount would be readily allowed, together with expenses of traveling to and returning from the army.

Should you conclude to accept this invitation you are requested to advise me of the fact, and proceed to the headquarters of General Smith at Fort Leavenworth, to receive from him such suggestions as he may have to offer.

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
JOHN B. FLOYD,
Secretary of War.

Reverend P. J. De Smet,
St. Louis, Mo.

St. Louis, Mo., August 10, 1858.

Father De Smet:

My Dear Sir.— General Harney desires me to state to you, that he has just received orders to repair to Washington to report to the War Department. From the announcements in the newspapers, the general is under the impression he is to be placed on service in Oregon, and in such an event, there is no one whose aid could be more valuable than your own, in the capacity of your profession.

The general proposes, therefore, that you continue your commission with the army and accompany him to Oregon in case he is sent, due notice of which he will telegraph to you on his arrival in Washington.

The general begs to assure you that every facility and encouragement will be given to the advancement of the good work you have already so successfully commenced in that country.

With the highest considerations of respect and esteem, I remain, my dear Father,

Your sincere friend,

A. PLEASONTON.

(Private.)

My Dear Father:

I send you your letter and also the orders for the officers of the different posts, through which you will pass, to deliver on your arrival.

I shall always look back upon the agreeable moments we have passed together as among the most pleasant of my life and if you will accept the best wishes of so humble an individual as myself, for your health and success through life, rest assured they will always remain with you.

With sentiments of the highest esteem and regard I remain, Father,

Your sincere friend,

A. PLEASONTON.

To the Reverend P. J. De Smet, S. J., etc., etc.

Headquarters, Department of Oregon.

Fort Vancouver, W. T.,
October 28, 1858.

To the Reverend Father P. J. De Smet, *Chaplain, etc.:*

Dear Sir.— The general commanding instructs me to say, that he most cordially approves of your proposition to visit the Cœur d'Alène Mission this winter; for he conceives the happiest results from your presence among the Indian tribes of that vicinity. He has directed that every facility shall be furnished you to enable you to perform in safety the inclement and trying journey you are about to undertake. A copy of his instructions is inclosed herewith. The general desires you to impress upon the Indians you are to counsel the strong necessity existing for them to live up to the conditions to which they have so lately subscribed in the treaties they have made, more especially in the surrender of such persons as were demanded of them. Two of these persons, Kamiakin and Schloom, it is reported, have gone away among the Flatheads, but that circumstance must not prevent the tribes concerned from using every endeavor to obtain possession of them for the purpose above indicated.

While informing the Indians that the Government is always generous to a fallen foe, state to them that it is, at the same time, determined to protect its citizens in every part of its territory; and that they can only expect to exist by implicitly obeying the commands they receive.

The same troops are permanently stationed in the country who met them in the field the past summer, and these will most assuredly be placed upon their trail in the spring with instructions to give no quarter, should they again turn a deaf ear to what has been told them.

I am instructed to say you will communicate freely with these headquarters. The best wishes of the general will attend you in the holy mission of charity to which you have devoted yourself in so generous a manner. I remain, Father, most respectfully,

Your obt. servant,

A. PLEASONTON,

Captain 2d Dragoons, Asst. Adjt.-Genl.

Headquarters, Department of Oregon.
Fort Vancouver, W. T.,
October 28, 1858.

Special Orders,
No. 4.

1. The Reverend P. J. De Smet, chaplain, etc., being about to proceed to the Cœur d'Alène Mission under instructions from the general commanding; officers commanding posts and stations in his route are directed to furnish the reverend father with every facility and means for prosecuting his journey securely, and in an expeditious manner. Orders will, therefore, be given to provide such guides, interpreters, escorts and animals to Father De Smet as will attain the object of this order.

2. The assistant quartermaster at Fort Walla Walla will defray the expenses of such expressmen as may be sent to that post, from time to time, by Father De Smet.

By order of Brigadier-General Harney,

A. PLEASONTON,
Captain 2d Dragoons, A. Asst. Adjt.-Gen'l.

Rev. P. J. De Smet, *Chaplain, etc.*

Headquarters, Department of Oregon.
Fort Vancouver,
January 1, 1859.

My Dear Father:

Your communication of the 9th ultimo, from the Cœur d'Alène Mission, has been submitted to the general who desires me to express to you the great gratification it has given him to learn of your safe arrival at the mission.

The interesting information you have furnished relative to the Indian tribes of your vicinity confirms the statements which have been tendered the general from every quarter, more especially the reports of the Reverend Fathers Congiato and Ravalli, who have lately returned from that country.

The confidence you feel in the peaceful desires of the Indians toward the whites is shared by the general. They have only to act up to these desires to obtain the good will of the whites toward them.

The general approves your proposition of permitting some of the chiefs of the various nations to accompany you to this place to pay him their respects. He will be glad to see them and to explain to them the intentions of the Government as far as they are concerned. Their expenses and food will be provided them during the journey to and from their homes, but they must not expect presents for the general has none to give.

It would be well that you return as early in the spring as practicable, for some contingency may arise requiring the general's presence elsewhere.

I am most sensible of the kind feelings you have been pleased to entertain toward myself, and tender you the assurance of an unworthy but devoted regard and friendship. May you always enjoy the blessings you so generously solicit for others.

Your letters have been duly forwarded.

I remain, Father, with the highest respect,

Your obedient servant,

A. PLEASONTON,

Captain 2d Dragoons, Asst. Adjt.-Gen'l.

Reverend Father P. J. De Smet, S. J.,

Chaplain, U. S. A., Cœur d'Alène Mission.

Fort Vancouver, W. T.,
May 28, 1859.

My Dear Father:

The general desires me to say he has notified Agent Owen not to interfere in any way with the Indian chiefs now at this place. He wishes you to inform the Indians of this, and that they are now solely under his orders.

I send you a package of books, which I pray you, my dear Father, to accept for the benefit of your red children of the mountains. With the best wishes and prayers of your sincere and humble friend.

A. PLEASONTON.

Father De Smet.

Headquarters, Department of Oregon.
Fort Vancouver, W. T.,
June 1, 1859.

Sir:

I have the honor to report, for the information of the general-in-chief, the arrival at this place, on the 28th ultimo, of a deputation of Indian chiefs from the upper Pend d'Oreilles, lower Pend d'Oreilles, Flatheads, Spokans, Colville, and Cœur d'Alène Indians, on a visit, suggested by myself through the kind offices of the Reverend Father De Smet, who has been with these tribes the past winter, and has counseled them, both as an agent of the Government and in his clerical capacity, as to the advantages accruing to them by preserving peaceable and friendly relations with the whites at all times.

These chiefs have all declared to me the friendly desires which now animate them toward our people, and they assure me that their own several tribes are all anxiously awaiting their return, to confirm the peace and good will they are hereafter determined to preserve and maintain. Two of these chiefs,— one of the upper Pend d'Oreilles and the other of the Flatheads,— report that the proudest boast of their respective tribes, is the fact that no white man's blood has ever been shed by any one of either nation. This statement is substantiated by Father De Smet. The chiefs of the other tribes mentioned state their people now regret they had been so deceived and deluded as to go to war with the whites the past year. They tender the most earnest assurances that such will never be the case again. All of these chiefs assert there will be no difficulty for the future as regards the whites traveling through their country, or in the occupation of it.

They request the Government to secure a reservation to their people, upon which they desire to live and be protected.

Kamiakin, the noted chief of the Yakimas, came in with these chiefs as far as Fort Walla Walla, with the intention of surrendering himself to my custody, but in consequence of an officious interference with these Indians on the part of Mr. T——, agent for the Flatheads, Kamiakin became alarmed, and returned to his people. No censure is to be attached to Kamiakin for this act, and I have caused him to be notified that I am satisfied with his present peaceful intentions. * * * *

I have also the honor to inclose a copy of Father De Smet's report as to the Indian tribes he has visited the past winter, which shows that peace exists among themselves as well as with the whites; and from my own observation I am convinced that with proper care, another Indian war of any magnitude cannot soon occur in this department.

It gives me pleasure to commend to the general-in-chief the able and efficient services the Reverend Father De Smet has rendered.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
W. S. HARNEY,
Brigadier-General Commanding.

Assistant Adjutant-General,
Headquarters of the Army, N. Y. City.

Letter of Captain Pleasonton.

Headquarters, Department of Oregon.
Fort Vancouver, W. T.,
June 1, 1859.

My Dear Father:

The general commanding instructs me to inclose a copy of his special order, No. 59, of this date, authorizing you to return to St. Louis, through the different tribes of the interior, which you are so desirous to visit once again, for the purpose of confirming them in their good disposition toward the whites, as well as to renew their zeal and intelligence in the elements of Christianity,— the means so signally productive of good-will and confidence, in your labors of the past winter, requiring such self-denial and resolution.

On your arrival in St. Louis, the general desires you to report by letter to the adjutant-general at Washington, when your relations with the military service will cease, unless otherwise ordered by the War Department.

The general is anxious that I should communicate to you the deep regret with which he feels your separation from the service, and in making the announcement he is assured the same feeling extends to all those who have in any way been associated with you.

By the campaign of last summer submission had been conquered, but the embittered feelings of the two races, excited by war, still existed, and it remained for you to supply that which was wanting to the sword. It was necessary to exercise the strong faith which the red man possessed in your purity and holiness of character, to enable the general to evince successfully toward them the kind intentions of the Government, and to restore confidence and repose to their minds. This has been done; the victory is yours, and the general will take great pleasure in recording your services at the War Department; for such services no one feels more sensibly than yourself the proper acknowledgment is linked with the hopes that are cherished in the fulfillment of a Christian duty.

Satisfied that all necessary blessings will be bestowed upon you, in whatever sphere of duty you may be called to serve, the general will always be happy to tender to you the evidences of his esteem and friendship. I remain, Father, with the highest respect,

Your most obedient servant,

A. PLEASONTON,

Captain Second Dragoons, A. Adjt.-Gen.

Reverend P. J. De Smet, S. J.,

Chaplain, etc., Fort Vancouver, W. T.

Headquarters, Department of Oregon.

Fort Vancouver, W. T.,

June 3, 1859.

Sir:

I have the honor to inclose, for the information of the general-in-chief, an interesting report from the Reverend P. J. De Smet, describing the country of upper Washington Territory, in the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains, now occupied by various Indian tribes.

This report is valuable from the rare advantages Father De Smet possessed for many years, in his position as missionary among those tribes, to obtain accurate information of the country; and his purity of character will always give respect and importance to his statements.

The description he gives of the upper Clarke's Fork, the St. Mary's or Bitter Root valley, the valley of Hell's Gate

Fork, the upper valleys on the headwaters of Beaver river, and the Kootenai country, in connection with his suggestion of collecting the remnants of the Indian tribes in Oregon and Washington Territories in that region upon a suitable reservation, is well worthy the serious consideration of the Government.

The country spoken of will not be occupied by the whites for at least twenty years; it is difficult of access, and does not offer the same inducements to the settler that are everywhere presented to him on the coast.

The system adopted in California of placing large numbers of Indians upon a single reservation, and causing them to adopt summarily the habits of life of the whites, failed in consequence of the abrupt transition brought to bear upon these simple and suspicious people. The plan proposed by Father De Smet is not open to this objection; it places the Indians in a country abounding with game and fish, with sufficient arable land to encourage them in its gradual cultivation; and by the aid of the missionaries at present with them, that confidence and influence will be established over their minds, by degrees, as will induce them to submit to the restraints of civilization, when the inevitable decree of time causes it to pass over them.

From what I have observed of the Indian affairs of this department the missionaries among them possess a power of the greatest consequence in their proper government, and one which cannot be acquired by any other influence. They control the Indian by training his superstitions and fears to revere the religion they possess, by associating the benefits they confer with the guardianship and protection of the Great Spirit of the whites. The history of the Indian race on this continent has shown that the missionary succeeded where the soldier and civilian have failed; it would be well for us to profit by the lessons its experience teaches, in an instance which offers so many advantages to the white as well as to the red man, and adopt the wise and humane suggestion of Father De Smet.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

W. S. HARNEY,
Brigadier-General Commanding.

Assistant Adjutant-General,
Headquarters of the Army, New York City.

Fort Vancouver, Nov. 9, 1859.

My Dear Father:

Your very kind and interesting letter of October 5th from St. Louis University was received by the last mail; and what may appear a little singular to you, I was discussing in my mind the propriety of writing to you when your goodness in sending me your letter relieved me from all doubts on the subject of your safe arrival at the end of your long trying journey. Permit me to assure you that no one has taken a deeper interest in your welfare and success than myself; it has been tinged with regret that I was unable to do so little in promoting the one or advancing the other; but now that you have triumphed over all your difficulties my satisfaction is the greater from the signal proofs you have shown how thoroughly you have understood the divine mission of charity intrusted to your keeping. How pleasant it must be for you to view all your good works and observe their benefits to others? For such were the labors our Saviour referred to when he spoke of "The one thing needful" to Martha.

We all miss you so much; I have not met an officer of your acquaintance who has not expressed great regret at your departure, and we all feel indebted to you for the good understanding that exists between the poor Indians and the whites at this time. No disturbance of any kind has occurred and I feel confident there will not be any.

Fathers Congiato and Brouillet dined with us yesterday; they both desired to be most kindly remembered to you. Father Congiato is to spend the winter in California and will return to the mountains in the spring.

I have sent the maps to Washington and Governor Stevens has promised to have them published. Your sketch of the Cœur d'Alène Mission I inclose; pardon me for having retained it so long.

The general desires me to express his warmest remembrances of the good offices you accomplished for his command and he assures you of his highest esteem and friendship always. For myself, I felt in separating from you the loss I incurred, for your benevolence and goodness deeply impressed me and disposed my waywardness to desire the same. Let me then cultivate your friendship in the hope of realizing from my honest intentions the unspeakable benefits that fixed principles of virtue and religion always confer.

With my humble prayers to God, to continue his blessings to you, I remain, my dear Father, with the kindest feelings of consideration and esteem,

Your sincere friend,

A. PLEASONTON.

The Reverend P. J. De Smet, S. J.,
St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.

Headquarters, Department of Oregon.
Fort Vancouver, W. T.,
June 1, 1859.

Special Orders No. 59.

1. The Reverend P. J. De Smet, chaplain, etc., having accomplished in a highly satisfactory manner the important duties confided to his charge in Special Orders No. 4 of October 28, 1858, from these headquarters, and

being now desirous of returning to his clerical station at Saint Louis, visiting the various Indian tribes of the interior in his route; he is authorized to do so. Commanders of posts and others belonging to this Department will afford every facility and assistance to the Reverend Father, when called upon by him to aid in his mission of peace to the unfortunate race whose confidence he has always most generously maintained.

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By order of General Harney.

A. PLEASONTON,
Captain Second Dragoons, A. A., Adjt.-Gen.

Reverend P. J. De Smet.

My Dear Governor:

This will be presented by the Reverend Father De Smet, the heroic missionary of the Indians among the Rocky Mountains. He was a great favorite of poor Schoolcraft and Mr. Weed on our voyage across the Atlantic in 1843. He is the same guileless Indian missionary now as he was then. Ever yours faithfully,

X JOHN,
Abp. of New York.

Hon. William V. Seward,
New York, July 14, 1861.

New York, Aug. 28.

Dear Sir:

My friend, Father De Smet, whom I think you saw a year ago, has just returned from a visit to his Indians beyond the Rocky Mountains and can impart useful information to you.

No white man knows the Indians as Father De Smet, nor has any man their confidence in the same degree.

I hope that you have sufficient leisure to give Father De Smet an audience.

Very truly yours,
THURLOW WEED.

President LINCOLN.

Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs.

March 21, 1864.

Reverend P. J. DE SMET, *St. Louis, Missouri:*

Sir,— This department has made arrangements with P. Chouteau, Jr., & Co., of your city to transport the annual supplies for the Indians bordering upon the Missouri river. and it is expected that the boat with them will leave St. Louis between the 1st and 10th of September next.

Referring to our conversation at the last interview, I have now to state that I am desirous of availing myself of your experience upon the subject of our relations with the Indians generally, and your knowledge of the character and habits, as also of your influence over the particular bands of the Sioux who have given us so much trouble in Dakota, and to solicit you to accompany the expedition with the hope that they may be induced to lay down their arms and establish peaceful relations with the Government.

It is believed that you can safely visit them in their camps and convey to them any message that the Government may wish to send them either from the Interior or War Departments. You will be accompanied by the agents of these people. It is also believed that an expedition under orders from the War Department will either accompany you or be in the country during your stay so that you may be able with the agent Latta to confer and co-operate with the commander of said expedition as to the best course to be pursued to put a stop to the depredations of the Indians and to secure a permanent peace with them.

* * * * * * * * *

Tell them how good it is to be at peace with the Government, whereas their utter extermination will be the result if they continue in hostility to the white people.

I have very great confidence in your prudence and capacity for this mission and therefore forbear to give you specific instructions for your guidance.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. P. DOLE,
Commissioner.

Fort Sully, Dakota Territory, July 12, 1864.[4]

H. G. MONSEIGNEUR ARCHBISHOP PURCELL:

Monseigneur.— Herewith I send you a testimonial which the Peace Commission, lately sitting at Fort Rice, has given to our well-beloved missionary, Father P. J. De Smet.

Probably you are informed in regard to the work of this commission during the last year. In the month of May of the current year the commission succeeded in convoking at Fort Laramie, on the Platte river, a certain number of chiefs belonging to the most formidable and most warlike tribes. The Hunkpapas, however, still refused to enter into any arrangement with the whites, and it is unnecessary to say that no treaty with the Sioux was possible, if this large and hostile tribe was unwilling to concur in it. In this condition of affairs, the Reverend Father De Smet, who has consecrated his life to the service of the true religion and of humanity, offered himself, despite his great age, to endeavor to penetrate to the hostile camps and to use his influence with the chiefs to induce them to appear before the commission at Fort Rice. As the letter of the members of the commission will inform you, there is reason to believe that his mission has been wholly successful.

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[4] From the French of the third Belgian edition. The original of General Stanley's letter was not available to the editors.

I could give you only an imperfect idea of the privations and dangers of this journey, unless you were acquainted with the great plains and the Indian character, which is naturally inclined to vengeance. Father De Smet, alone of the entire white race, could penetrate to these cruel savages and return safe and sound. One of the chiefs, in speaking to him while he was in the hostile camp, told him, "if it had been any other man than you, Black-robe, this day would have been his last."

The Reverend Father had with him, as interpreter, Mr. Galpin, who is married to an Indian woman of the Hunkpapa tribe. This lady is a good Catholic and an excellent person, a striking example of what the influence of religion and civilization can accomplish for the welfare of the Indian. On leaving Fort Rice, Father De Smet had to direct his course straight west. The enemy had pitched his camp a little above the mouth of the Yellowstone river, near Powder river. The distance to be traveled, going and coming, was 700 miles. The country is a barren desert. Nothing in the way of vegetation is to be seen save sagebrush, the *artemisia* of the plains. No buffalo are to be found except along the Yellowstone, where they are very numerous.

The Reverend Father is known among the Indians by the name of "Black-robe" and "Big Medicine Man." When he is among them he always wears the cassock and crucifix. He is the only man for whom I have ever seen Indians evince a real affection. They say, in their simple and open language, that he is the only white man who has not a forked tongue; that is, who never lies to them. The reception that they gave him in the hostile camp was enthusiastic and magnificent. They came twenty miles to meet him, and the principal chiefs, riding beside him, conducted him to the camp in great triumph. This camp comprised more than 500 lodges, which, at the ratio of six persons to the lodge, gave a total of 3,000 Indians. During his visit, which lasted three days, the principal chiefs, Black Moon and Sitting Bull, who had been redoubtable adversaries of the whites for the last four years of the war, watched constantly over the safety of the missionary; they slept beside him at night, lest some Indian might seek to avenge upon his person the death of some kinsman killed by the whites. During the day time, multitudes of children flocked to his lodge, and the mothers brought him their new babies that he might lay his hands on them and bless them.

In the gathering of the Indians the head chiefs promised to put an end to the war. Sitting Bull declared that he had been the most mortal enemy of the whites, and had fought them by every means in his power; but now that the Blackrobe had come to utter the words of peace, he renounced warfare and would never again lift his hand against the whites. The chiefs delegated several of their principal warriors, who, in company with Father De Smet, arrived at Fort Rice on the 30th of June.

The arrival of the Reverend Father with the Indian delegation gave rise to great rejoicings among the friendly tribes assembled at the fort. They escorted him thither with great ceremony. The warriors formed a long file and marched with true military precision. It was a really remarkable spectacle, though little in accord with the tastes of the good Father, who does not love the sound of trumpets and the glare of parades.

Not in fifty years, very likely, had there been seen so numerous an assembly in our country as that which had come together at Fort Rice. The interests at stake were far above anything that our friends can imagine. The first chiefs or representatives of nine bands of the Sioux nation were present. I do not think it necessary to mention the strange names of these different bands, which are besides for the most part unknown to you; suffice it to say that the tribes represented at the meeting cover with their habitations an extent of territory equaling in area six times that of the State of Ohio; and any one who is at all acquainted with the Indian question, is aware that no peace with the Indians can be worth anything if it does not comprehend the Sioux, who are the most numerous of all the tribes with which we have had to treat down to this day, and the most warlike as well, and the one that has had the most to complain of on the part of the whites. The treaty signed by all the principal chiefs now needs only the sanction of the Senate to become a law.

I am persuaded that it is the most complete and the wisest of all the treaties thus far concluded with the Indians of this country. Without going into details, by the provisions of this treaty the Indians are to be abundantly provided with victuals, clothing and agricultural and mechanical implements. No money payments have been stipulated, as unfortunately money excites the covetousness of more than one and often converts commissioners, governors of territories, superintendents, agents and traders into a band of thieves. Without doubt the fulfillment of the provisions of this treaty will assure peace with the Sioux. The importance of this result will be understood, if it is considered that a distinguished general [Sherman] stated, last fall, that a war undertaken with the object of exterminating the Indians of the plains (and he thought it would have to come to that extremity) would cost the country $500,000,000. I will say in passing that this method of pacification seems to me altogether too much like violence. The same general, at the time of the Rebellion, said that not less than 200,000 men would be required to bring Kentucky and Tennessee back to their duty; his words seemed at the time to be wild, but later events showed the contrary.

But it is time to close this long letter. Whatever may be the result of the treaty which the commission has just concluded with the Sioux, we can never forget nor shall we ever cease to admire, the disinterested devotion of the Reverend Father De Smet, who, at the age of sixty-eight years, did not hesitate, in the midst of the heat of summer, to undertake a long and perilous journey, across the burning plains, destitute of trees and even of grass; having none but corrupted and unwholesome water, constantly exposed to scalping by Indians, and this without seeking either honors or remuneration of any sort; but solely to arrest the shedding of blood and save, if it might be, some lives, and preserve some habitations to these savage children of the desert, to whose spiritual and temporal welfare he has consecrated a long life of labor and solicitude. The head chief of the Yanktonnais, Two Bears, said in his speech: "When we are settled down sowing grain, raising cattle and living in houses, we want Father De Smet to come and live with us, and to bring us other Black-robes to live among us also: we will listen to their words, and the Great Spirit will love us and bless us."

DAVID S. STANLEY,
Major-General, U. S. A.

Helena, M. T.,
Dec. 8, 1869.

Dear Father De Smet:

Your very welcome letter dated November 10th I received two days ago on my return from the Yellowstone, where I had been for the last three weeks attending to my Crow children. You know I have built this year an agency for them. I went to visit them to see about their receiving their annuity goods according to the treaty. They were not very well pleased with the treaty, and far less with the class of goods they received, which certainly were ill-fitted for Indians as wild as the Mountain Crows are. It will take many years before they begin to be civilized. Yet as a nation they are friendly and well disposed toward the whites, but bitter enemies to the Sioux and other Indians, and very superstitious. The young officer they have there is I fear not fitted for the position. They require some one of more character to control them. I believe there is a good opening for your Society there and if you think the matter worthy of the trial, I will do all in my power to assist you. I hope to be able to visit the East before spring and shall of course take in St. Louis on my way, but I have much here to do before I leave. In the first place I will try and regulate the present difficulties with the Blackfeet. The chiefs are on the Teton and will meet me. Then I go again to the Flathead country to try and effect a treaty with the [illegible]. In making that treaty I will do all I can for the Mission of St. Ignatius. For the good they have done these Indians they deserve every consideration on the part of the Government. I find my duties here very arduous. I have to travel most of the time, and when I return my stay here for a few days is occupied at the desk attending to my papers and accounts.

I thank you for your kind attention to my stepdaughter. I write to you with much trouble on my mind. My wife is very sick and troubled with the complaint that was near causing her death last February. I shall always be happy to hear from you when you have time to write.

Truly your friend,
ALF. SULLY.

Cheyenne Agency, D. T.,
March 13, 1870.

Reverend P. J. De Smet, *St. Louis, Mo.:*

Reverend Father.— It is no idle motive which prompts me to address you. I have been asked so often by the Indians what has become of you that to satisfy myself and them I have taken this liberty. The "Log," an Indian who accompanied you and Major Galpin to the hostile camps, speaks daily of you. He says he is in the same good road you put him in and he and a number of his people intend planting corn this spring. He is one of the most anxious to hear from you. He tells me to write to you that the death of Major Galpin has left him as an orphan, that the only hopes of the Indians were in Major Galpin and you; and one being dead their hopes are now solely in you. He says they know you are their friend and wish them all well and that you will do all in your power to help them; he and all the Indians wish to hear from you in response to this.

The Indians of this agency and Grand River have behaved exceedingly well all winter, and most of them intend farming this spring and it is my opinion that if let alone by the hostile Indians and treated fairly by their agents and the whites in the country they will get along well enough.

Trusting that I may get an early answer from you as to when the Indians may expect to see you, I am, Father,

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
GUS. GUELBERTH.

Sioux City, May 1, 1870.

Reverend P. J. De Smet:

Dear Father.— I left Fort Berthold April 13th in a mackinaw boat and arrived at this place on the 28th ultimo. I have made several trips at this season but this one was the severest I have experienced. I left the Indians at Berthold in a good condition; there have been less suffering from hunger and fewer deaths this last winter and spring than the two previous, and they are better satisfied than they have been for years. The Sioux from Grand River have been a little troublesome the past winter, killing several of the Indians at Berthold. Our Indians do not intend to go to war until another raid is made against them. White Shield and Son of the Star told me to tell you that they would like very much to see you. On my way down I found two missionaries at Yankton agency, Episcopal and Methodist, and there is some talk of their coming up to Berthold and at other points. I sincerely hope you will endeavor to have at least one Catholic mission somewhere in the upper country. The Berthold Indians have been expecting you for the last two seasons. I should like very much to see you on this subject and was in hopes of having that pleasure, but on arrival here I found it would not be necessary to go on to St. Louis so I return from here on the *Emilie La Barge* when she arrives.

Should it be decided that you establish a missionary for these Indians, the most eligible place that I could suggest is opposite the Little Missouri where there is a point of land from half to three miles wide between the two points of timber, and seven miles bottom land to the hills, heavy timber on the opposite side of the river, and the same in the two points above and below on the Berthold side. Lignite is in abundance on the Little Missouri side opposite the site. The Indians would readily move from Berthold and with very little inducement I think the Assiniboins might be prevailed upon to join them at that point. It will be advisable to act promptly before the Indian agent goes to too much expense at Berthold. Since he has to build, I think it would be preferable to be nigher to timber and fuel. Around Berthold everything is ruined in the way of timber, grass, etc. My cousin tells me he thinks, if our troubles are ended, that it was through your influence with the official, for which, dear Father, please accept my sincerest thanks. Your kind and friendly interference in my behalf shall never be forgotten.

Beauchamp and son were well when I left; they intended opening a woodyard. Pierre Garreau is still at Berthold; he is declining very fast, although not sick.

Please write me at Fort Stevenson and if there is anything I can do for you up there please command me. I do not think that I will be down to St. Louis before next spring, when I intend to bring my children up to see their mother. I should like to hear where Mrs. Meaker is at; she has forgotten her godchild at Berthold. Good-bye. Your friend.

F. F. GERARD.

CHAPTER X.

FUNERAL ORATION ON FATHER DE SMET.

By Bishop Ryan.

Onias, that truly good and gentle man, so modest in his countenance, so regular and moderate in his ways, so agreeable in his speech and who had practiced all kinds of virtues from his youth up. Macc. II.

[1]SUCH were the eminent qualities of that Onias, high priest of Judea, whom the Jews so bitterly bewailed and whose loss was regretted by even Antiochus himself, mindful of the amenity of character of the great priest and of the upright life which he had led. These words, my brethren, are admirably suited to the apostolic man whose mortal remains are here exposed to your view before the holy altars. He was, as you all know, of a lovable and simple nature, and he served God in faithfulness from his infancy. It is right that we should be met together to pay to his memory the homage of our veneration. Wherever the name of the zealous missionary is known, not only throughout the United States but in Europe as well, wherever the renown of his great and noble labors has spread, the news of the mournful event which has brought us together and occasioned our grief, will be received with profound sorrow, and all men who have come in contact with this godly man, regardless of the creed to which they may belong, cannot but admire and exalt the virtues and merits of this worthy priest of the Lord. Yes truly, in the tent of the poor Indian as in the heart of our populous cities, people will speak with love and respect for a long time to come of

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[1] From French version.

STATUE OF FATHER DE SMET IN TERMONDE.

the Reverend Father De Smet, whom death, alas! has just taken from us.

Despite the lustre which his apostolic labors shed over his person, and all the meritorious works which marked his life, this man of God displayed in all his conduct the simplicity of a child; he was kindly, candid, modest, and even showed the timidity of tender years, and the language of Tertullian may be applied to him, which he was wont to use in speaking of the old servants of Christ in his time: "They are old men, but at the same time they have the graces and simplicity of youth. The purity of their lives and the cleanliness and uprightness of their souls enable them to preserve to the close of their lives the springtime freshness of their earlier years." Our divine Master, my brethren, signalized this innocence and childlike candor as a characteristic token of the heavenly vocation, saying, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Such was our regretted and venerable friend: he was at the evening of his life what he had been at the dawn of his career and at the noonday of manhood. It was his rare qualities of rectitude and simplicity that won him the confidence of so many friends, and it was the support of this confidence, with God's help, that enabled him to effect such great things. Nearly fifty years of his existence were spent in the fulfillment of the mission for which God sent him into the world. Yes, my brethren, this zealous priest busied himself for a half-century, with the most perfect purity of intention, in the service of God, in saving souls, in propagating the glory of the Master of heaven and earth:—what a noble life! And think that he expended his strength in behalf of the poor savages, those outcast, disinherited children of the desert, and this despite the fact that they were mere strangers to him, wholly unknown to him — he had never seen them, and would naturally feel no sympathy for them. Yet almost the whole of his life was passed in the service of the great cause whose invincible champion he made himself, namely, the civilization of the wild and nomadic Indians. It was for their sake that he so often visited Europe, in quest of auxiliary missionaries and of financial and other aid, needed for the establishment and maintenance of missions among the red men.

He loved these unhappy savages as the apple of his eye; he studied to win them to himself, to deserve their confidence; he defended them against their detractors, with that calm energy and continuity of action that we knew in him. I once heard some one say in my presence to Father De Smet, "But, Father, how is it possible for you to be so contented among these frightful savages?" "Frightful savages?" he replied. "You don't know what you are saying. You do not know those simple, kindly people. I have met more savages in the great cities of America and Europe than I have ever seen in my life in the plains and deserts of the United States." And indeed, brethren, the Father was right. The civilized man to whom the truths of the gospel have been revealed, but who, despite the light that he has received, abuses the Lord's gifts, that man more rightfully deserves the name of savage, than those miserable Indians who have never enjoyed the same advantages.

Consider the works and deeds of these so-called civilized men. Have they not in these last days horrified the whole world with their unheard-of crimes? Look at the horrors of the Paris commune, the massacre of Archbishop Darboy and the other hostages. Are not the monsters in human form who committed these misdeeds, more hideous in their perversity than the worst among the savages? Taking into account on the one hand the means of intellectual and moral culture which the scoundrels of the Commune had at their disposition to be honest men, and on the other the absence of even elementary notions of civilization among the Indians, unfortunate race, whom the scriptures depict to us as "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death," — must we not conclude that the most blameworthy are found in our great cities, and that they have not even the excuse for their unnatural instincts, of the almost invincible ignorance of every law of decency which seems to be the lot of our unfortunate red men?

"I have been in a position," said our dear friend, "to appreciate these poor Indians. A band of them once came to me to receive holy baptism. I gave them the proper instruction, and made them children of heaven. Then they besought me earnestly to come again to them the following year, and I promised to do so. I returned at the appointed time, and as they showed an eager desire to approach the sacraments, I asked them what faults they had been guilty of since my last visit. They looked at me with astonishment and a kind of stupor, and said, 'do you suppose, Father, that after all the benefactions we have received from God, those of creation, redemption, the knowledge of the true son of God, Jesus Christ, and your coming to us, do you suppose that we could be so wicked as to offend the Lord and appear before you charged with sins or crimes?'" You see, brethren, those unhappy Indians were hurt, at the thought that any one could think them capable of ingratitude toward God. Admirable sentiments! which explain why they had no faults upon their consciences to reproach themselves with.— How many Christians, even among our practicing Catholics, could say as much?

Always, yes, always, brethren, our missionary took up the defense of his Indians. He suffered for them, he sympathized with them, and he used to say that in order to judge them justly one must live among them and be able to put himself in their place. The Indians have often shown themselves, it is true, embittered against the whites and inclined to revolt; but the reason of their behavior is easily understood. Have they not been hunted and driven like wild beasts? Do they not know that they have been thrust back by successive degrees from the shores of the Atlantic to the edge of the Pacific ocean? They have learned from their forefathers, and experienced it themselves, that they are to be despoiled of their lands, foot by foot. It irritates them to have to leave the land of their birth, where the ashes of their fathers repose.

Let me tell you, brethren, a story related by Lord Erskine, the celebrated Scottish lawyer. An American Governor, in quest of Indian lands, once asked the chief of a certain tribe, "Tell me: why is it, that this river has its source in those lofty mountains and comes down to empty into the sea? Who is it that puts in motion these furious winds which rage in winter, but blow with only a feeble breath in summer? What hand planted the century-old trees of your forests, so thick that the sun's rays cannot penetrate them? Tell me, what is this mysterious power that launches the thunderbolt and is able to put the whole world ablaze? Who is the author of these wonders?" "It is the same Supreme Being," the Indian replied, "who gave you the vast lands on which you live on the other side of the water; but he it is also who had made us masters of the land we dwell in and which you covet; it is he who caused us to be born here, and it is under this title that we shall defend our homes." When he had said thus, the savage brandished his tomahawk and struck up with enthusiasm his nation's hymn of war.— Such, my brethren, are the sentiments by which the savages of our America are animated. Let us not judge them too severely, and let us see to it that we are just toward them. Let us remember that one of the effects of Christian civilization is to make the human heart incline toward forgiveness.

A remarkable fact, brethren, in the annals of the Catholic Church, is this; the conversion of rude and uncultured peoples has always been due to the zeal of our missionaries. Look at the Indians of South America, of Canada, and the savages of other countries; they have been led away from their sensual and barbarous habits to a clean, regular and peaceable life, by apostles like Father De Smet. It is the bright beams from the Cross that have dissipated the darkness of error and vice which had hitherto enveloped these degraded populations; it is the preaching of the gospel that has brought forth these fruits of salvation and effected the astonishing changes in their manners of which we in our day are witnesses. It is under the shadow of the standard of Christ that this so profound moral revolution has its beginning and ending. These phenomena belong to history and are undeniable. But whence comes this efficacy and this civilizing power of the Catholic apostolate? No doubt, my brethren, we must first attribute it to the action of God, that is, to grace; but we must also remark this: the Catholic pastor identifies himself with his flock, he loves his sheep with his whole heart, he is devoted to them under all circumstances, and if need be, he is capable of defending them at the peril of his own life. A Protestant, as impartial as he is learned, Mr. Arthur Help, tells us that when the Spaniards had conquered the New World, they set about torturing the poor Indians. Well, would you know what energetic influence it was that neutralized the unjust aggressions of the Spanish invaders? It was the devotion of the illustrious sons of St. Dominic. Those were the first missionaries who evangelized the uncultivated field of America and watered it with their sweat.— In speaking of the persecutions which the Indians suffered from the Spanish conquerors, I must not forget to add that their most intrepid defender was that admirable bishop, Bartolomeo de las Casas, the Father De Smet of his day. He and his it was who protected the Indian inhabitants of the forests and deserts.

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Our dear and regretted dead friend followed the same line of conduct; he loved the poor savages from the bottom of his heart, and he had a mother's tenderness and devotion for them. He made allowances for their weaknesses, attributing them to their nomadic habits of life, to which they are so madly atttached. "What is there strange," said our wise and peaceful colonizer, "in the fact that the Indians have but an indifferent opinion of the benefits of our pretended civilization, when they can only judge of it from the examples of perversity and vice which the whites display to their eyes? What criterion have they to examine the conduct of the emissaries or agents of the Americans, other than the memory of having been often duped and robbed by them?" Father De Smet was guided in his apostolate by very different motives; his views were supernatural. How many times have I heard him utter this wish: "Oh! how I should like to pass my life and end it, among our dear Indians!"

When he felt his end at hand, one of his greatest consolations was to think of the many little children whom he had regenerated in the holy waters of baptism, and whose prayers would, at the supreme moment, be of such great aid to him. He had also the greatest trust in the merits of the adult savages who had persevered in their faith, and who would be praying for him also. When I saw Father De Smet last, on Wednesday, the 21st of May, two days before his death, I found him full of courage and hope. He said to me, "I have served the good God for many years; I am going to come before him pretty soon, and my heart is very full of confidence and of real consolation. I have the greatest hope," he said further, "in the efficacy of the prayers of all those to whom the Lord has sent me in times past; I count especially on the merits of Jesus Christ, poor sinner that I am, and I love to think that the Lord will have pity on me in the hour of my agony." — Tell me, my brethren, could a man who had passed fifty years of his life in crime, and in whom remorse for his sins had inspired the deepest repentance, have spoken of himself with greater humility and contrition? Forgetting his stern toil and his incontestable merits, the good Father thought only of turning lovingly toward the infinite satisfactions of Jesus Christ, and of reposing upon the Lord's inexhaustible mercy. Such should be the sentiments of every true Christian. The more nearly we approach God by the exercise of virtues, the more also we become convinced of our own infirmity or weakness; the more too does our conscience become enlightened and delicate, and the more do we deplore our slightest faults and dread the effects of divine justice, and the more, finally, do we put our hope in God, leaning upon the Lord's kindness and his merciful promises.

Learn, then, my brethren, from the example of Father De Smet, to practice piety and to display in your own behavior Christian simplicity, and while amid your tears you offer your prayers for him to the Lord, purify your hearts at the same time and remember that in all your acts you should seek alone the glory of your Creator.

The scene of this world is quickly past. If you practice this purity of intention, it will bring with it that other Christian virtue, uprightness of heart. Walking under the eye of God, you will have nothing to conceal; there will be nothing in your conduct to resemble duplicity or intrigue. A man who works for God has no other object than God; his works are all manifest, they bear the stamp of sincerity; he goes forth full of light and truth; his conduct can be known and judged by all the world. It was thus that when the red man of the forest saw Father De Smet, he judged favorably of that countenance upon which such frankness, honesty and innocence were imprinted. The Indian felt instinctively drawn toward this man of God, whose behavior was dictated by no motive of self-interest. The savages understood perfectly well that the zealous missionary came among them, not to make a fortune, not to win renown or acquire standing, but purely to labor for the salvation of their souls. This is why they instantly understood whatever the Father said to them; they read in the features of the worthy priest the uprightness of his life, and they fell prostrate at his feet; they implored the aid of his sacred ministry, and asked to be taught. It is a remarkable thing, brethren; Father De Smet never needed, so to speak, but to show himself, and on the instant a current of active sympathy was established between him and those he approached. The red men felt themselves fascinated by his gaze, by his expressive speech and his masculine energy. We admit that Father De Smet was fortunately endowed by nature — but nature, my brethren, is God; he it was who fashioned the instrument, and shaped it to the work for which he destined it. Religion perfected nature and lent lustre to the natural gifts of this gentle, generous man. Religion will likewise perfect you, and teach you how to act for God; it will gain you the grace of living in conformity to the nobility of your origin and the grandeur of your destiny; and thus prepare for you a happy and holy death.

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